A

RELATION

Of the

DEATH

Of the Primitive

PERSECUTORS.

Written Originally in Latin *by*

L. C. F. LACTANTIUS.

Englished by GILBERT BURNET, D.D.

To which he hath made a large

PREFACE

concerning

PERSECUTION.

AMSTERDAM,
Printed for J. S. 1687.

LIBRARY OF THE
Union Theological Seminary
NEW YORK CITY
PRESENTED BY
Samuel Macauley Jackson
FEB 17 1911

LIBRARY OF THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK

The Translators PREFACE.

AMong all the Discoveries that have been made in this Age, of the *Books* that had been esteemed lost, there is none, since that of the *Epistle of St. Clemens*, that has been received with more joy than this of *Lactantius's* Book of the *Death of the Persecutors*, for which the World is beholding to the happy Industry of the most learned *Baluzius*, who having found this treasure, not only communicated it to the World, but enriched it with his learned *Notes*: by which he has added a new *Essay*, to the many that have already appeared, of his great Sincerity, his profound Learning, and of his solid Judgment: It has been since that time reprinted at *Oxford*, with shorter *Notes*; in which there are many happy conjectures, made both for

ſupplying ſome of the *Words* that were worn out of the *Manuſcript Copy*, and for correcting ſome Paſſages, which the *Copyer* perhaps writ wrong, and it is upon that *Edition* that this *Tranſlation* is made.

The Importance of this *Book* will be eaſily apprehended, by thoſe who conſider that *Lactantius* was the politeſt Writer of his time, in whom one finds ſomewhat very like *Auguſtus*'s Age revived; he had alſo particular Opportunities of being well informed of his Subject, by the Poſt to which he was advanced in *Conſtantine's Court*, of being his *Son's Tutor*. It is true, his Eloquence carries him often into ſtrains that become an *Orator*, better than a *Hiſtorian*: for he has a heat of ſtile, that ought not to be imitated by one that would write *Hiſtory*. But he ſeems to have deſigned this *Book* to be a mixed ſort of writing, between a *Diſcourſe* and a *Hiſtory*; ſo that the Figures that agree not to the one, may be allowed to the other.

The Account that he gives of *Saint Peter's* coming to *Rome*, cuts off the Fable of his being there for *five and*

twenty

twenty years: but if what he ſayes of things at ſo great a diſtance from his own time, is not thought ſo Authentical, and if his Authority ſeems not ſtrong enough to cut off all thoſe *Perſecutions* that are ſaid to have riſen between *Domitians* Reign and *Decius*'s, ſince he repreſents all that Interval as a time of a long Peace to the *Chriſtians*; yet we muſt at leaſt ſuppoſe him, to have been much better Informed of that which fell out during the *laſt Perſecution*; ſo that the beginning which he aſſigns to it cuts off all thoſe *Legends of Martyrs*, that (as is pretended) ſuffered before that year, and as we cannot doubt of the time in which he tells us the *Perſecution* began, ſo no more ought we to call in queſtion the Limits that he ſets to it; and therefore ſince he tells us, that *Conſtance* ordered only, that the *Churches* in which the *Chriſtians* held their *Aſſemblies*, ſhould be pulled down, and that he would not carry the *Perſecution* further againſt the *Chriſtians* themſelves; and ſince he excepts the *Gaules* out of thoſe *Provinces* that felt the Fury of thoſe *Edicts*, we ſee what a number of

Legends there are to be cut off. For the truth is, that very ſoon after this *Perſecution* was over, ſome that loved either to make (or at leaſt to report) very tragical Stories concerning it, ſeemed to give no Bounds to their Invention upon a Subject that was fruitful enough of it ſelf, and ſo needed not to have been ſwelled up by ſuch Additions. The Deſtruction of the *Records* that the *Chriſtians* kept, which were ſo carefully ſearched after during this *Perſecution*, gave ſome colour for thoſe pretended *Diſcoveries*; for it ſerved turn to give them credit, to ſay, that ſuch *Relations* had been preſerved from the *Searches* of thoſe *Inquiſitors*, and ſo that they were by accident found out in ſome corner, where very probably thoſe that forged them, both laid them and found them: and the matter would no doubt have been received with more Credit, if ſome Dream or Viſion had been pretended, as that which had made the Diſcovery. Of all thoſe *Legends* none is more copious, nor leſs credible than that of the *Thebean Legion*, and that upon many accounts; but as the ſilence, not only

only of *Euſebius* and *Sulpicius Severus*, but of all the other Writers of the fourth *Century*, gave a juſt Prejudice againſt a *Story* that begun not to appear till the middle of the fifth *Century*; ſo the poſitive Teſtimony of *Lactantius*, who excepts the *Gaules* from the *Perſecution*, puts an end to the *Fable*. For tho he ſhews ſo great a diſpoſition to ſpeak well of *Conſtance*, that this may ſeem to leſſen the Authority of one, who to make his Court with the *Son*, would naturally raiſe the *Father's* Character; yet ſo remarkable a tranſaction as that was, could not have been ſuppreſt with any ſort of *Decency*, by one that muſt have certainly heard of it if it was true.

The falſe appearance of a greatneſs of mind, that was inferred from *Diocletian's* reſigning the *Empire*, is alſo taken off by this *Relation*; ſince it is plain, that both *Diocletian's* Brain was turned, and that he was forced to it; ſo that his *Reſignation* was not the *Effect* of his *Philoſophy*, but of the *Unnatural Ambition* of his *Son in Law Maximian*.

The Subject of this *Diſcourſe*, and

the Application to which a *Tranſlation* of it tyed me, together with the *preſent* ſcene of affairs, led my mind very naturally into more general thoughts. The *Characters* of thoſe *Ancient Perſecutors*, ſuch as *theſe*, that they had delivered themſelves up to all the Brutalities of ſenſual Pleaſure, that they had ruined their Subjects by ſevere *Impoſitions* for maintaining vaſt *Armies*, that they had in their Wars, ſhewed more care than was decent in preſerving *themſelves* out of all *danger*, that they were weak to the moſt exceſſive *Flatteries*, the Profuſeneſs of their Expence in the raiſing of coſtly *Buildings*, their great *Succeſs* in a courſe of many years, their Superſtitious and Fearful *Tempers*, and to crown all, the *Cruelty* that they practiſed in the *Perſecution*, to which they were uneaſily drawn, and in which they begun at firſt with requiring all to *abjure*, beſides many other particulars; all theſe, I ſay, inſenſibly carry ones thoughts to make *Parallels* between ſome *Modern Perſecutors*, and *thoſe* that are here ſet forth: but if the reſpect due to *their* ſublime *Character*, makes one drive

drive away thoſe leſs decent ſallies of his mind, to which he is carried before he is aware, yet the Importance of this matter leads to ſpeculations that are more General, and by conſequence leſs offenſive. And ſince the Melancholy State of things at *preſent* carried me in thoſe Intervals in which I diſcontinued the dry work of *translating*, to conſider the grounds on which thoſe cruel and perſecuting *Doctrines* and *Practices* are founded, together with the Motives from which they riſe, the Characters that accompany them, and the Effects that follow them; I thought I might be forgiven a little, if I took the liberty to ſwell up the bulk of this ſmall *Book* with a *Preface* of ſome length; in which my deſign is not only to expoſe this ill natured *Principle*, and to ſhew, that where-ever it is authoriſed, it is a more infallible mark of an *Antichriſtian Church*, than all the other Characters are of an *Infallible Church*, to which thoſe pretend, that have died themſelves ſo red in the Blood of others; but likewiſe to form in the Minds of thoſe who hate *Perſecution*,

perhaps only becauſe they either feel it, or are afraid of it, ſuch a Notion of this Matter, as may preſerve them from falling into the ſame Exceſſes if a Revolution in the State of Affairs ſhould put it in their Power, to uſe others as hardly as they have been uſed by them. It has been often obſerved, that tho a *Plea for Moderation* is the Sanctuary of all the Unfortunate, yet their Fortunes came no ſooner to be changed, but that they inſenſibly got into that *Principle* which was ſo much decried by themſelves, when their Affairs were in an ill condition: as if the only quarrel that they had to *Perſecution*, was becauſe they had not the managing of it themſelves. I will treat this Subject with all the eloſeneſs that the Matter deſerves, or that I am capable of; and will avoid the ſerving up what I am to propoſe with the garniſhings of the fine *Sayings* of *others*: for as that would carry me too far, ſo a *good Reaſon* is ſo much a better thing, than a round Period, or a laboured Sentence, that the Mind finds it ſelf ſatisfied with the *one*, whereas the Fancy is only pleaſed with the *other*.

All

All *Perſecution* riſes out of an Impatience of Spirit, which makes a man leſs able to bear Contradiction. There is a Tyranny in moſt mens nature, which makes them deſire to ſubdue all others by the ſtrength of their underſtandings: and ſuch men have an implacable hatred to all that do not render themſelves to their Reaſons; and think that they are affronted when other men refuſe to ſubmit to them: ſo that he who would ſtrike at *Perſecution* in its root, muſt begin here, and endeavour to ſoften men, eſpecially towards thoſe who differ from them in matters of *Religion*. This Imperious temper, when it works upon Subjects of *Religion*, finds ſomewhat to raiſe its ſpleen, that was of it ſelf Impetuous enough before: and that which is called *Fury* and *Rage*, when it is imployed in other *Diſputes*, comes to be called *Zeal* when it is turned towards the Theories that relate to another World.

But when we conſider what a ſublime thing *Divine Truth* is, and what a poor low thing the *Mind of Man* is, we ſhall ſee cauſe to blunt a little the

edge of our Spirits, if they are too ſharp in ſuch matters. Man is much governed by Fancy, and Fancy follows the texture of the Animal Spirits, which renders many more capable of apprehending Objects that are ſome way proportioned to them, and more diſpoſed to follow them; ſo that *Temper* prepares men for ſome Opinions and prepoſſeſſes them againſt others. With the greater part of mankind, *Education* is ſo powerful, that they are ſcarce able ever to overcome it; and if Education and Temper have hit together, it will require a very extraordinary elevation to reſcue a Man from their force. Men likewiſe receive with their Impreſſions of *Religion* ſuch a reſpect for them, as makes them look on every thought that calls them in queſtion as criminal: and when perſons are bred up to diſquiet themſelves with Scruples, if they have ſo much as made a doubt of their *Religion*, it is not hard to ſee them adhere ſo firmly to the *Principles* of their *Education*, which ſtick ſo faſt to the worſt ſort of men, that even *Atheiſts* themſelves after all the pains,

pains they take to get rid of them, cannot ſhake them off ſo entirely, but that they will be apt to return oft upon them. Men that think much, and that Reaſon well, that are freed from the biaſs that Intereſt, Honour, Kindred, and Cuſtom, do give them, and that have leiſure to examine matters carefully, may indeed get above all theſe: yet there are ſo few that can do this, and there are yet ſo much fewer, that will do it; that it is rather a wonder to ſee ſo many change their Perſwaſions, than to ſee ſo few do it. And indeed it is ſo ſublime a *Theory* to think on God, and his Attributes and Works, or to think of another State, and of the Way that leads to it, that till God furniſhes out a new Miſſion of *Apoſtles* with a Meaſure of thoſe Extraordinary gifts, which he poured out on the Great *Pentecoſt*, it is not eaſy to imagine how the Converſion of *Heathen Nations* ſhould be made. For tho the *Idolatry* of ſome of theſe is extream groſs, yet their *Prieſts* have ſuch Symbolical ſignifications for all theſe Rites, that they do much diminiſh the horror which is raiſed by the firſt

ſight of them in the minds of Strangers; and ſince the chief grounds, upon which we prove the *Chriſtian Religion*, are taken from the *Prophecies* in the *Old Teſtament* and their Accompliſhment in the *New*, from the Evidence that was given concerning the *Miracles*, the *Death*, and the *Reſurrection* of *Chriſt*, which we confirm from the Collateral Proofs of the State of that time, of the writings of the Enemies of this *Religion*, and of that Succeſſion of Authors that in all the Ages that have paſt ſince, have mentioned thoſe matters, and cited the *Books* which we hold to be Divine. All this is ſo evident to thoſe who can make the Enquiry, that it is ſtrange to find how any one can withſtand it; but to *Barbarians*, who know nothing of it, and who have no way of Informing themſelves concerning it, all this can ſignify nothing. So that in order to the convincing their underſtandings, (for I do not treat of Gods ſecret Methods in touching their Conſciences) I do not ſee how we ſhould expect that they ſhould yield eaſily, unleſs there were a new Power of working *Miracles*.

cles conferred on those who labour in this work. And what noise soever the *Missionaries* may make with their *Miracles* in those remote parts, it is plain, these are all Impostures; for the most necessary of all other *Miracles* for the Conversion of strange Nations, being *the Gift of Tongues*, with which the *Apostles* were so wonderfully furnisht at first, and since they all are forced to acknowledge, that this is wanting to them, we have all possible reason to conclude, that God would not change his Methods, or qualify men to work Wonders, and not give them that which is both the most sensible and the most useful of all others, towards that end for which he authorises them.

But to return from this digression, a man is scarce the Master of his own thoughts: Habit, Constitution, and other things do so concur, that he cannot open his eyes to new Objects, nor see them in a new Light other than that in which he has been accustomed to view them; and a Man can no more change his notions of things, because a set of new Opinions would accomodate him better, than he can change the

the reliſh that his ſenſes, his ear or his taſt has in their objects; a man may prevaricate, but he ſtill thinks as he thinks; and cannot think otherwiſe, becauſe he would have himſelf do ſo: But if a man is not the maſter of his own mind, much leſs is any other man the Maſter of it. No man has that Superiority over any other mans reaſon, as to expect, that it ſhould alwayes accomodate it ſelf to his: and the ſevereſt exerciſe of Tyranny muſt ſtill leave the thoughts at liberty: the forcing a man to ſay, or do otherwiſe than he thinks, by threatnings, the execution of which is above his force to endure, is only the delivering over ſuch a perſon to the rack of his own Conſcience here, and to all thoſe miſeries hereafter, which muſt be the portion of Hipocrites, and of Diſſemblers with God or Man. Nor is there ſuch an infallible diſtinction in one mans nature from another, that the one is more like to be in the right than the other: Since therefore, among all thoſe that differ, ſome muſt be in the wrong, thoſe that have the power in their hands, may poſſibly be of the wrong ſide, and in that caſe all their

their Severity is turned againſt the Truth, and thoſe who believe it. And ſince God makes the Sun to ſhine, and the Rain to fall on the juſt as well as the unjuſt, *Gideons* reaſoning may be applyed to this matter *if Baal is a God, let him plead for himſelf*; and the force of *Gamaliels* Argument, that *if it is of Men, it will come to nought; and if it is of God, we muſt not fight againſt him.* As it ſilenced an *Aſſembly* of very fierce *Perſecutors*, ſo it is full as ſtrong now, as it was then: For Reaſon is Eternal, and changeth not. It ſeems alſo plain, that thoſe Actions which concern humane Society, belong indeed to the Authority of the Magiſtrate; but that our thoughts, with relation to God, and ſuch actions as ariſe out of thoſe thoughts, and in which others have no intereſt, are Gods Immediate Province; and can belong to no other Juriſdiction. God only knows our thoughts, as he alone can change them; ſo that a Magiſtrate by encroaching upon them, breaks in upon Gods propriety, and upon that eſſential right of humane nature, of worſhipping God according to our conviction, which

is

is in us Antecedent to all humane Government, and can never become subject to it.

But if the General *Theories* from the nature of man, give a very favourable view of what is now advanced, the characters of the *Christian Religion*, and the many expreſs texts that are in it ſhould determine this matter more poſitively. The *Religion* revealed by *Moſes* conſiſted in Temporal *Promiſes*, an Earthly *Canaan*, and all the bleſſings of this life; ſo that ſince the *Jewes* had all theſe things by vertue of that Covenant, it was very reaſonable that a violation of that *Law* ſhould inſer a forfeiture of all thoſe Rights, that the *Jews* held by vertue of it; and therefore it was as juſt, that a *Jew* ſhould have been put to death for the violation of thoſe Laws, as it is lawful for us to put a man to death, that coins or clips Money: yet as for *Opinions* the caſe was different, even among the *Jews*: and therefore, tho the Doctrines of the *Sadducees* ſtruck at the Foundations of all Religion, the *Phariſees*, when they had the upper hand, never carried the matter ſo far as to proceed to extremities

tremities againſt them. But what Severities ſoever might have agreed with the *Moſaical* diſpenſation, they ſeem to be all out of doors under the *Chriſtian Religion*; which gives us no Earthly *Canaan*, no Temporal *Bleſſings*, nor the Rules for *Civil Society*: but having found the World in the poſſeſſion of their Temporal Rights, it only came to ſuperadd to thoſe the Doctrines and Rules of a Divine Diſcipline, upon which the Happineſs or Miſeries of another State do depend. Now it ſeems to be an uncontеſted Rule in Juſtice, that in whatſoever Society one is engaged, the Violation of the Laws of that Society can only infer a Forfeiture of all that one had or might have expected by vertue of it: but this cannot be carried ſo far, as to make one forfeit all that he holds by vertue of any other Society, to which he belongs; and therefore, ſince we hold our *Temporal Eſtates* and *Liberties*, not by vertue of our *Chriſtianity*, but as we are the Members of the *State* or *Kingdom* to which we belong, our doing any thing that is only contrary to our *Religion*, may well make us forfeit all that belongs

longs to us by vertue of our *Baptiſmal Covenant*; but this ought not to be carried ſo far as to cut off thoſe *Rights* that we have antecedent to our *Chriſtianity*, as we are *Men*, and the *Subjects* of a *Civil Government*. Our Saviour confirmed all this by ſaying, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*; *that he came not to deſtroy*, *but to ſave*; and by giving this Rule of Juſtice, *of doing to others that which we would have others do to us*: which would ſoon let all *Perſecutors* ſee how differently they act to it: but above all, our Saviour has made the Doctrines of *Meekneſs* and *Charity*, ſuch main Ingredients in his *Goſpel*, that he has made them the *Characters* by which his *Diſciples* may be every where known; and this *Spirit* of *Love* is ſo diffuſed thro the whole Writings of the *N. Teſtament*, that how hard ſoever it may be to underſtand ſome of the other paſſages that are in them, yet there is no ambiguity at all in thoſe that ſet this forth; we are not only reſtrained from *ruining* thoſe who differ from us, but we are required to *love* them, to *bear* with them, and to deal with them in the Spirit

Spirit of *Meekneſs*: there are ſome of the *Epiſtles* that do not mention ſeveral of the Duties Incumbent on *Chriſtians*, yet there is not one, how ſhort ſoever, in which this of *Love* is not propoſed, in terms that are both ſtrong and tender; and while the *Church of Corinth* was almoſt rent aſunder by a variety of Opinions, and by the different Parties that followed the ſeveral Teachers that had been among them; St. *Paul* does not enter much into the Grounds of their Diſputes, but recommends *Love* and *Charity* to them, in terms that ſhew how much he himſelf was Inflamed while he writ them; and he is carried into all the raptures of a Divine Eloquence that ſo tranſporting a Subject could inſpire: *S. John*, lived ſo long as to ſee a great deal of the firſt fervour of the *Chriſtian Religion* ſlacken; but when he writ to revive that Spirit, the Argument upon which he dwells chiefly, is to perſuade all to *love one another*, and he does that in the ſofteſt and moſt melting terms that can be imagined. The Controverſy concerning the Obligation that lay on the *Gentiles* for obeying the *Moſaical Law*, was judged by

by the *Apostles* against the *Judaisers*, and the Inferences that depended on that Controversy were such, that Saint *Paul* shews, they went so far as to make void *the Death of Christ*; yet the same *Apostle* is gentle to those that without seeing the extent of these consequences, were carried away by those *Judaisers*; so that he acknowledges, that in their observing them from a good motive, they were *acceptable to God*; and that as the *Kingdom of God*, or the Gospel, consisted not in those scrupulous Distinctions of *Meats* and of *Drinks*, but *in Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*; so he adds, that every man was to endeavour to be fully perswaded in his own mind, and was not to *judge his Brother* in such matters, but to leave him to the Judgment of God. This way of managing a Controversie, that was of such importance, and that was maintained with so stiff an Opposition, even to that extraordinary Authority that was lodged in the *Apostles*, ought to have been the measure upon which all the succeeding Ages of the *Church*, ought to have formed themselves; and when the *Apostles*, that had

an

an infallible Aſſiſtance, and ſo might have ſpoken in a ſtrain of a higher Authority than any that have come after them, yet thought fit to treat of thoſe Matters in ſuch an humble and ſoftning ſtile, thoſe who cannot pretend to ſuch a direction, ought not to take upon them to dictate, and to threaten and deſtroy thoſe who differ from them.

It is indeed an amaſing thing, to ſee how much the *Chriſtian Church* has departed from that Pattern: and when one conſiders the firſt beginnings of the *Chriſtian* and the *Mahometan Religion*, he is not a little ſurpriſed to ſee the changes that have befallen both. The bleſſed Author of our *Holy Religion*, as he was a Pattern for Humility and Charity, ſo he *was made perfect thro Sufferings*: and his *Religion*, as it contains precepts ſuteable to the Example that he gave, which are ſet down in the plaineſt and moſt perſuading Expreſſions poſſible, ſo it gained its firſt Glory in the World, and obtained its chief Triumphs over it, by the *Meekneſs* and *Gentleneſs*, and the *Love* and *Charity* of thoſe who embraced it: on the contrary,

contrary, the *Mahometan Religion* began in the Perſon of that *Impoſtor*, with all the Fierceneſs of rage, and was carried on by the Sword, by which *Mahomet* pretended that he was ſent of God to convert the World: The *Nations* that have received the *Mahometan Religion*, are by their Conſtitution rough and barbarous: and yet how ſhameful a reverſe of the firſt beginnings of the *two Religions* is but too viſible to the World: the *Mahometans* in a courſe of ſeveral Ages are ſo much ſoftned, that inſtead of that cruelty with which their *Religion* appeared at firſt, they are now ſo gentle, that *thoſe of a Religion*, which believes theirs to be only an Impoſture, live ſecure under them, and know the *Price* that the *Liberty of their Conſcience* muſt riſe to: and that being payed, they enjoy in all other reſpects the Protection of the Government, together with the publick Exerciſe of their *Religion*: whereas on the other hand, that part of the *Chriſtian Church*, that pretends the higheſt, has ſo far departed from the Meekneſs of its *Author*, and of his firſt Followers, that notwithſtanding all

all the poliſhings of Learning and Civility that are in it, it is now the cruelleſt and the moſt implacable *Society* that has ever yet appeared in the World: if there were no other Evidences but this ſingle one, it is enough to demonſtrate, how much that Body has departed from its firſt Inſtitution: and if our Saviour has given us a ſhort Abridgment of the Character of the *Devil* in theſe two qualities, that *he is a Lyar and a Murderer*, then any Body of men, that has decreed, *that faith is not to be kept to Hereticks*, and that has alſo decreed *the Murder of ſo many Innocent Perſons*, who have done nothing againſt that Civil Society to which they belong, that deſerves a forfeiture of their Lives; ſuch a Body, I ſay, if we may take our Saviours Character for a Rule, looks more like the Followers of that fallen Spirit, than the Body of which the Lamb of God is the Head. And when we conſider the plain and expreſs Words, in which the great Duties of a Holy Life are delivered in Scripture, but moſt particularly thoſe of *Love* and *Charity*, and the Darkneſs that are in many other paſ-

ſages of which the meaning is more diſputable, it looks like an unaccountable Perverſeneſs to ſee men, who ſtill pretend to make that Book their Rule, yet to be ſo viſibly faulty in executing the one, and ſo exceſſively ſevere in impoſing the other, of which I ſhall content my ſelf to give one ſingle Inſtance.

Pope Leo the Tenth in the *Reformation* that he ſet out, with the concurrence of the *Lateran Council*, order'd a ſevere *Proſecution* to be made of all *Hereticks*, and that all the *Laws* againſt them ſhould be put in execution: but at the ſame time, he order'd ſuch ſlight puniſhment againſt thoſe that ſhould *wilfully* and *publickly* Blaſpheme *God* and *Chriſt*, even tho they relapſed in it over and over again, that it is plain he had no mind to deter men with too much ſeverity from the practice of that which was ſo common in his own Court: a ſmall Fine, or the Forfeiture of the Profits of a Benefice, is all the puniſhment that he laid on the one, even when *Clergy men* relapſed in it. This may ſerve to ſhew, that tho naturally one is apt to think *Blaſphemy* a much

a much more heinous Crime than *Hereſy*, yet a *Pope*, together with a *Council*, which they pretend was *General*, made a Diſtinction in the puniſhing of them, which is very little for their Honour.

The *Chriſtians* did, during the firſt Ages, declare highly againſt all *Cruelty* on the Account of a Difference of Perſuaſion in matters of *Religion*: and tho their Intereſt Naturally led them to this, yet we paſs a very hard Judgment on thoſe times, if we think that they were only of that mind, becauſe the Power was then in the hands of their Enemies. When the *Empire* turned *Chriſtian*, the very *Heathen Worship* was not only tolerated for above a whole Age together, but the *Heathens* themſelves continued to be in the chief Imployments of the *Empire*: and it is pleaſant to ſee how the *Heathens*, that had ſo long perſecuted the *Chriſtians*, and that had contrived the ſevereſt of all the *Perſecutions* under *Julian*, which very probably had been put in execution, if he had returned victorious from his *Perſian* Expedition, ſaw the State of things no ſooner altered, than

they began to imploy all their Eloquence in the behalf of *Toleration*; as if *Liberty of Conſcience* had been an eſſential Right of Mankind, from which they ought never to be cut off: and they carry'd this ſo far, as to pretend, that a difference in *Religion* tends more to the Honour of God, than a Uniformity in it could do: and ſo they fancied, that a variety in it was acceptable to God.

The firſt ſeverity that *Chriſtians* practiſed upon one another, was the *banishing of Arius*, and a few of his Followers: it muſt be acknowledged, that this ſeems to be the utmoſt extent of *Civil Authority* in thoſe matters: for certainly a Government may put ſuch perſons out of its protection, that are Enemies to its Peace, and ſo baniſh them upon great occaſions, giving them leave to ſell their Eſtates, and to carry away with them all that belongs to them; yet this being all that any Humane Government can claim, it ought not to be applied too eaſily nor raſhly, till it is viſible, that all other Remedies are ineffectual, and that the publick Safety can be no other

way

way ſecured: but tho this ſeverity againſt *Arius* had no great effects, yet the *Arians* had no ſooner the Power in their hands, than they put in practice firſt all the Contrivances of Craft and Fraud, together with many leſs crying Violences, under *Conſtance*, and they carried this afterwards to a more open *Perſecution* under *Valens*; and after that, both in *Spain* and *Africk* it appeared, that a cruel Spirit was ſo inherent in that party, that it ſhewed it ſelf as oft as ever they had it in their Power: but while *Valens* perſecuted in his Diviſion of the *Empire*, it is obſerved, that *Valentinian* his Brother thought it was enough to ſupport the *Orthodox*, without perſecuting the other; *Gratian* carried the matter further, and tolerated both almoſt equally. And in the happy turn under *Theodoſius*, at what pains was *S. Gregory Nazianzene* to reſtrain the *Orthodox* from retaliating upon the *Arians* the ill treatment that they had ſuffered from them: and not only the *Novatians*, but even the *Arians*, continued to have their Churches in the Imperial Cities. The firſt Inſtance of the Imploying the

Secular Arm againſt *Hereticks*, that was ſet on by any of the *Orthodox*, was under the Reign of that bloody Tyrant *Maximus*, and it was managed by two ſuch ſcandalous *Biſhops*, that their ill Lives is no ſmall Prejudice againſt every thing that was carried on by ſuch Inſtruments. This was condemned by the beſt *Biſhops* of that Age, and the ill Effects of that Severity are very copiouſly marked by the Hiſtorian. One is unwilling, for the ſake of thoſe Ages, to reflect on the Rigour that appears in ſome *Laws* that are in the *Code*; yet the mild behaviour of *Atticus*, *Proclus*, and ſome other *Biſhops*, is marked with the praiſes that were due to it: and it is probable, that thoſe *Laws* were rather made to terrify, than that they ſhould be executed.

The *Donatiſts*, after a Conteſt of above 120 years continuance, that was managed at firſt more gently, grew at laſt ſo fierce and intolerable, that not being contented with their own Churches, they broke in upon the Churches of thoſe of the *Unity*: and committed many Outrages on the Perſons of ſome of

of the *Bishops*, putting out the Eyes of ſome, and leaving others for Dead: the *Bishops* upon that conſulted, whether they ought to demand not only the *Emperour's* Protection, but the Application of the Laws made againſt *Heretieks* to the *Donatiſts*. *S. Auſtin* and ſome *Bishops* oppoſed this for ſome time; but they yielded at laſt: and theſe Laws were ſo ſeverely executed, that not only the *Donatiſts* themſelves complained heavily of them, but *S. Auſtin* in ſeveral Letters that he writ to the Magiſtrates upon this occaſion, made the ſame complaints; he interceded very earneſtly for the *Donatiſts*, and ſaid, that *it detracted much from the Glory of the* Church, *that had received ſo much Honour from the ſufferings of the* Martyrs, *to ſee others ſuffer upon the account of the* Church: and he told them plainly, that *if they did not proceed more moderately, the* Biſhops *would ſuffer all that could come upon them from the Rage of the* Donatiſts, *rather than Complain any more to thoſe who acted ſo rigorouſly*. Yet tho *S. Auſtin* condemn'd the Exceſſes of the *Civil Magiſtrates* in ſome particulars, he ſet him-

ſelf to juſtify Severity in General, when it was imployed upon the account of *Religion*, and all the moderate Pleadings for *Liberty*, that are to be found either in *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and more copiouſly in our Author *Lactantius*, with relation to *Heathens*, and the like Reaſonings that are to be found in *Athanaſius*, *Hilary*, and *Lucifer*, with Relation to the Perſecutions of the *Arians*, were in a great meaſure forgot; *Saint Auſtin* had a heat of Imagination, that was very copious, which way ſoever he turned it: and this was imployed chiefly in allegoriſing Scripture, ſo as to bring together a vaſt number of proofs for every cauſe that he undertook; without troubling himſelf to examine critically what the true meaning of thoſe Paſſages might be: and he is ſo apt to run out in all his Reaſonings into exceſſive Amplifications, and into all the Figures of copious and uncorrect Eloquence, that it is no wonder to find that paſſage of our *Saviour* in the *Parable*, *compel them to enter in*, with ſome other places miſapplyed on this occaſion.

With

With that *Father* the Learning of the *Weſtern Church* fell very low, ſo that his *Works* came to be more read in the ſucceeding Ages, than the Writings of all the other *Fathers*: and in this, as in other things, men that knew not how to reaſon themſelves, contented themſelves with that laſie and cheap way of copying from him, and of depending on his Authority. The Incurſion of the *Northern Nations*, that overthrew the *Roman Empire*, and thoſe Poliſhings of Learning and Civility that fell with it, brought on a Night of Ignorance, that can ſcarce be apprehended, by thoſe who have not read the Writings of the following Ages: *Superſtition* grew upon the ruins of *Learning*, and eat up all. The fierce Tempers of the *Northern People* being muſled up in Ignorance, and wrought on by Superſtition, were eaſily leavened with Cruelty: perhaps the *Holy Wars*, and what they obſerved in the Rage as well as in the Succeſſes of the *Saracens*, heightned this further: at laſt *Hereſy* came to be reckoned the greateſt of all Crimes; and as it condemned men to everlaſting

Burning ſo it was thought that thoſe might be well anticipated by temporary ones of the *Inquiſitors* Kindling. It is true, the *Church* pretended that ſhe would ſhed no *Blood*: but all this was inſufferable jugling: for the *Churchmen* declared who were obſtinate or relapſed *Heretick*s; and the Secular Arm was required to be ever in readineſs to execute their Sentence. This was not only claimed by the *Biſhops*, but it was made a part of their Oath at their Conſecration, *that they ſhould Oppoſe and Perſecute Hereticks to the utmoſt of their power:* Nor were they contented to proceed by the common Rules of Juſtice upon Accuſations and Witneſſes; but all Forms were ſuperceded, and they by vertue of their *Paſtoral Authority*, (as if that had been given them to Worry their Sheep, and not to Feed them) objected Articles to their *Priſoners* upon ſuſpition, and required them to purge themſelves of them by *Oath*: and becauſe *Biſhops* were not perhaps all ſo equally Zealous and Cruel, ſome of them being Perſons of great Quality, ſo that ſome remnants of a generous Education, and

of

of their lay pity, might ſtill hang about them; that Bloody Man *Dominick* took this work to task, and his *Order* has ever ſince furniſhed the World with a ſet of *Inquiſitors*, compared to whom all that had ever dealt in Tortures in any former times were but Bunglers.

So far has this Melancholy Speculation of the Degeneracy of the *Church* of *Rome* carried me: they at laſt came to extol a Zeal againſt *Hereſie* as the higheſt Act of Piety towards God: and ſince *Hereſie* is reckoned by *S. Paul* among *the Works of the Flesh*, it ſeemed as juſt to puniſh it in the ſevereſt manner, as it was to puniſh any of the other *Works of the Flesh*: and ſince all *Hereticks*, were looked on as Perſons damned, all Tenderneſs towards them, and Pity for them, was as far extinguiſhed as it was poſſible. For a *falſe Religion* will not eaſily have the better of good Nature ſo entirely, as to root it quite out; tho it muſt be acknowledged that the *Roman Religion* has done more towards that, than any other that has ever yet appeared in the World. All the room that was left for good Nature, was the favourable Definition that was given

of *Hereſy*: by which *Obſtinacy* was made its peculiar Character, that diſtinguiſhed it from *Error*, which lies in a more Innocent Miſtake concerning Divine Matters: and as many have explain'd this *Obſtinacy*, it amounts to a continuing in *Errour* after one is convinced of it. This Notion of *Hereſy*, which has been received by many of the greateſt Men even in the *Church* of *Rome* it ſelf, ſeems to agree well with that of *St. Paul's* ranking *Hereſy* among the *Works of the Flesh*; for if it is meerly a miſtake in the Judgment, in which one continues, becauſe he cannot overcome his perſuaſion, nor ſee Reaſons that are ſtrong enough to oblige him to change his Mind, ſuch an adhering to *Error* may be called any thing rather than a *Work of the Flesh*. But if a Man from a Principle of Intereſt, Pride, or Diſcontent, either throws himſelf into ill Opinions, or continues in them after his Mind is better enlightned, ſo that he ſtifles and denies that inward Conviction, then the Reaſon is very plain, why ſuch an ill Temper of Mind ſhould be reckoned a *Work of the Flesh*, becauſe it plainly ariſes

ariſes out of a depraved Nature.

I will not here enter into ſo troubleſome an Enquiry as it would be; to examine how far an *Erroneous Conſcience* acquits one before God; for that muſt be left to Him, who will judge every Man according to his Works, and who beſt knows how far he will accept of a general Repentance of unknown Sins, and of a general Act of Faith, even of Truths that are yet unknown; but as for the Judgments of men, certainly when the other parts of ones life make it clear, not only to a Judgment of Charity, but even to that of Diſcretion, that he is ſincere, and that he means well, it is hard to know when he is *Obſtinate*, and when his *Errors* become *Hereſies*, that is to ſay, *Works of the Flesh*.

So far have I been led upon the conſideration of the *Spirit of Perſecution*, that is not only warranted by Cuſtom, and a long continued Practice; but is by the Authority not only of *Popes*, but even of *General Councils*, eſtabliſhed into a Law on the *Church of Rome*. I am carried next into a Scene of Thoughts that are more particularly

ſuted to the *Doctrines* of the *Reformed Churches*: and here it muſt be acknowledged, that *Perſecution* is a more juſtifiable thing according to the *Principles* of the *Church of Rome*, than it is according to *our Tenets*; for the *Church of Rome*, that pretends to be *Infallible*, has a better Right to demand a blind Submiſſion from all its Subjects, and to treat thoſe roughly who refuſe to grant it, than a *Church* that pretends to nothing but a Power of *Order* and *Government*; and that confeſſes, ſhe may be miſtaken. *Our being Subject to Error*, is unreaſonably urged, when men would carry it ſo far as to make us doubt of all things: yet it ought at leaſt to have this effect on us, as to keep us from being too ready to judge hardly of thoſe who are of another mind, or to uſe them roughly for it; ſince it is poſſible, that they may be in the Right, and that we may be miſtaken; at leaſt, they may have very probable Reaſons for their Opinions, which if they do not quite juſtify their Miſtakes, yet do very much excuſe and leſſen them. It is likewiſe viſible, that all ſevere Proceedings upon the diverſity

diverſity of *Opinions*, how effectual ſoever they may be on baſe-minded men, who will alwayes make Shipwrack of a good Conſcience, when it comes in competition with the *Love of this preſent World*, yet work quite contrarywiſe on men of awakned Underſtandings and generous Souls; inſtead of gaining on ſuch Perſons, theſe Inſpire them with horror at a ſort of men who go about to ruin companies of people, that never did them hurt. It is from this, that thoſe Violent Hatreds ariſe among men of different Perſuaſions. Every man is not capable to underſtand an Argument, or to be much diſturbed at it: and tho *Divines*, that carry their Speculations further into the Conſequences of Opinions, whether Real or Imaginary, grow hot and angry at one another upon thoſe Heads, yet the people underſtand them little, and feel them leſs: but every man feels an Injury, and Nature makes her Inferences very quick upon it: and concludes, that *thoſe who uſe us ill, hate us*: and there muſt be a great degree of Regeneration to keep men from hating thoſe that hate them:

upon

upon this ariſes all the Animoſity that is among the ſeveral Parties: for every one reckoning himſelf a Member of that Body to which he aſſociates himſelf, thinks that he is obliged to reſent all the Injuries that are done to his Fellow-members, as much as if they were done to himſelf in particular: and by the ſame natural Logick, he caſts the Guilt of the Wrongs done his own Party, not only on thoſe Individuals of the other Party, from whom they did more Immediately ariſe, but upon the whole Body of them: and ſo here a War is kindled in mens Breaſts, and when that is once formed within, it will find ſome unhappy occaſion or other to give it ſelf a vent. Thoſe who are ill uſed, are in a State, like that of a Maſs of humours in the Body, which roul about leſs perceived, till ſome unlucky Accident has weakned any part of it; and then they will all diſcharge themſelves on the part that ſuffers. Men that are uneaſie, naturally love Changes: for theſe are like the ſhifting of poſtures, they give ſome preſent eaſe, and they flatter the Patient with the hope of more to follow.

The

The Advice that the old *Man* of *Samnium* ſent his *Son*, was certainly very wiſe; he had Intercepted the whole *Roman Army* in the Hills, ſhutting up the Paſſages ſo that they could neither go backward nor forward: the *Father* adviſed him firſt to diſmiſs them all without any Injury, ſince that would probably oblige the *Romans*; or if that were not followed, to cut them all off; for that would weaken them conſiderably: whereas the middle Method, which the *General* took, of letting them all go, having firſt put a publick Affront on them, enraged the *Romans* without weakning them. According to this Advice it ſeems evident, that all conſiderable *Bodies of Men*, that are in any *State*, are to be ſet at eaſe, or to be quite rooted out; and there is nothing wiſe in this ſevere Method, but an extream and an unrelenting *Perſecution*, and in this point, if the *Church of Rome* has forgot the *Innocence of the Dove*, yet it muſt be confeſſed, that ſhe has retained the *Wiſdom of the Serpent*.

Perſecution is not only hurtful to thoſe that ſuffer many hard things by

by it, but is likewiſe miſchievous to them, by the averſion that it inſpires in them to thoſe at whoſe hands they ſuffer, by the ill Habit of mind into which it throws them, and by thoſe violent Projects and Convulſions which do very naturally come into the heads of thoſe, who as they feel much, ſo they fear yet more.

Thoſe that do *perſecute*, tho they ſeem to triumph for a while, with the Spoils of their Enemies; yet will ſoon feel how this ſinks their Credit extreamly among thoſe that were more Indifferent Spectators, while the Debate was managed with the Pen or Tongue; but they will certainly take part at leaſt in their Compaſſions with the Miſerable; and will be diſpoſed to think ill, not only of thoſe men that are heavy upon their harmleſs Neighbours, but even of the Cauſe it ſelf, that is ſupported by ſuch Methods.

The multitude even of the loweſt Order of men has a remnant of good Nature left, which ſhews it ſelf in the ſad looks that all put on at the Executions even of Malefactors: but if a falſe *Religion* has not quite extinguiſhed

Humanity

Humanity in its Votaries, this will make a more ſenſible Impreſſion, when men that have done nothing amiſs, and are only in fault becauſe they cannot help thinking as they do, are made Sacrifices to the Rage of others, that perhaps have little more to ſay for themſelves, but that they are in poſſeſſion of the *Law*; which in the next Revolution of affairs that may fall out, will be an Argument ſo much the Stronger for uſing themſelves in the ſame manner, becauſe it is a juſt retaliation on them for that which they made others to ſuffer.

The men of *Perſecution* do alſo naturally engage themſelves into the Intrigues of *Courts*, and all the Factions of Parties: they enter into Dependances upon *Miniſters of State*, who drive them on to execute all their Paſſions, and to ſerve all their Ends: and who have too good underſtandings themſelves not to laugh at the officious forwardneſs of thoſe who are perhaps more eager than is intended, in the doing of that for which thoſe very perſons, whoſe blind Inſtruments they

are

are at one time, will reproach them at another.

In ſhort, *Perſecution* does extreamly vitiate the Morals of the Party that manages it. The worſt men, ſo they are furious and violent, are not only connived at, but are even courted: and men otherwiſe of ſeverer morals, will inſenſibly ſlacken, by reaſon of their Engagments with vicious men, whom they will find themſelves forced to cheriſh and Imploy: and if thoſe who have *perſecuted* others, fall under a Reverſe of Fortune, and come to ſuffer themſelves a little of that which they made others feel, as their ill behaviour will deprive them in a great meaſure, of thoſe Compaſſions that would otherwiſe work towards them, ſo it will raiſe within them many uneaſy Reflections upon their own Actings, which will prove but Melancholy Companions to them in their Afflictions: and theſe will force them to conclude, that becauſe they ſhewed no Mercy, therefore they now meet with the requital of *Judgment without Mercy*; which how unjuſt ſoever it may

may be, in thoſe by whom they ſuffer, yet they will find it meet to look up to God, and to confeſs, *that juſt and Righteous are all his Wayes*: and it may be reaſonably apprehended, that it may have contributed not a little to fill up the meaſure of the Sins of a *Church*, and to bring down ſevere ſtrokes upon them, when the viſible Danger, which was apparent from a formidable *Enemy*, could not turn their thoughts to that ſide, but that inſtead of Uſing Legal and juſt Precautions for their own Security, they let themſelves looſe to all the Rages of a mad *Proſecution* of ſome poor undiſcreet and deluded *People*; and all this to gratify their own Revenges, or to Inſinuate themſelves into the Favours of *thoſe* who do now juſtly laugh at them, when the turn that they intended is ſerved by their means: and *thoſe* who would prepare themſelves for thoſe hard things which they have reaſon to expect from *a Church that has alwayes delighted to bath her ſelf in Blood*, ought ſeriouſly to profeſs their *Repentance* of this Fury in Inſtances that may be as Viſible and

edifying

edifying as their *Rage* has been publick and deſtructive.

But there remains yet one point, without which I am ſenſible that this diſcourſe will appear defective; I know it is extream tender in our preſent Circumſtances, yet that does not deter me from venturing on it; it is, *How far Proteſtants ought to Tolerate Papiſts.* It ſeems at firſt view the moſt unreaſonable thing in the World, for thoſe to pretend to it, who we are ſure muſt deſtroy us, as ſoon as it is in their power to do it. I ſay, they *muſt* do it; ſince by thoſe *Councils*, which they themſelves hold to be *General*, the extirpation of *Hereticks* and the *breaking of Faith to them*, has been ſo formally decreed, that it is a fooliſh piece of preſumption to imagine that they can ever lay down thoſe Principles. *Infallibility* is the bottom upon which their *Church* is built, and ſhe muſt be as *Infallible* in the *Rules* that ſhe gives of *Morality*, as ſhe is in her Deciſions in Points of *Faith*: for all the Reaſons that are given for private perſons depending on the *Church* for the *Rule* of their *Faith*, do bind

bind as ſtrongly to depend likewiſe on the *Church* for the *Rule* of *Life* and *Manners*. If we are in danger of forgetting, what was decreed in that *Church* ſo long ago, they take pains from time to time to refreſh our Memories, not only by their Cruelties in the laſt Age, for which there was ſo much more to be ſaid, than for later Barbarities, becauſe the *Reformation* was lookt on as a revolt then made from eſtabliſhed Laws: and if *Perſecution* can be at any time excuſed, it is in the firſt beginnings of *Hereſies*, before the Evil has ſpread it ſelf into greater numbers of men: The Heats that were raiſed in the firſt Formation of that Breach, may ſome way take off from the guilt of the Sacrifices that they made: for men in the firſt ſurpriſes of Anger do ſeldom Reaſon true, or Act wiſely; but when a whole Age has paſſed, and thoſe firſt Heats are in a great meaſure laid, and when all the Securities that could poſſibly be demanded have been given, and while theſe have been enacted into the moſt *Obligatory Laws* that could be contrived, which were confirmed by ſolemn

lemn *Oaths*; and while the persons so secured had not given the least pretence to their Enemies to say, that they had forfeited those Rights by any ill Behaviour of theirs; yet *the Breach of Faith*, and the Rage of *Persecution*, that we see before our eyes, both in *France* and *Piedmont*, are things that do not only raise an Indignation in humane Nature, that cannot be well governed, without a very Extraordinary measure of Grace, but they offer even to our Reasons, Arguments against all Lenity towards them, that are very hard to be resisted: And it is certain, that all the *Regulars*, and chiefly the *Jesuites*, are so possessed with those *Maxims*, and with that Temper, that it is a degree of Credulity scarce to be reconciled to common prudence, to fancy, that ever they can change their Natures. Those *Notions* are infused in them with their first Education; they are restless by their tempers; they are dedicated not only to their *Church*, but to their *Order*; from which they can expect no distinction, but by their Activity and Fierceness: they are taught to Hate us, and to pursue our Ruin by all Methods possible,

poſſible, and they have Receipts for the greateſt ſins, if the Penitent will come up to their price; and the Pardon of Sin will be thought a good penny worth, when it is to be by the Deſtruction of *Hereticks*. I know the *Jeſuites* ſtudy to perſuade the World, and that they have infuſed it into a great *Prince*, that *P. de la Chaiſe* has had no hand in the Violences now on foot in *France*, but that he has oppoſed them, and ſo they throw them entirely on the *Arch-Biſhop of Paris*, and on a *Lady* that is now in great Credit: ſo ready are they to Sacrifice the Reputation even of their chief Patrons, when it may ſerve their turn to deceive others: but the contrary of this is ſo evident, that it is a new Diſcovery of the Impudence of that ſort of men. Yet after all this, and after all that can be ſaid from thoſe *Principles*, that ſubject them to a *forreign Juriſdiction*, and that veſt the *Pope* with a Power of *Depoſing Heretical Princes*, where I acknowledge the Inferences are ſo juſt as well as ſo ſevere, that I know not how to anſwer them

well to my ſelf; yet the Body of the *People*, that are bred up to the other Points of *Popery*, and that know nothing of theſe, which their *Prieſts* keep as Myſteries from them, and either deny them quite, or diſguiſe them ſo that they ſhew in other Colours to thoſe who believe Implicitly, and who do not give themſelves the trouble to enquire into ſuch matters; but think it is ſafer, as well as eaſier, to take things upon truſt; they I ſay, are not ſo formidable as to raiſe our Fears and Jealouſies to ſo high a pitch: and *Secular Prieſts* are naturally a ſofter ſort of men, who have not the ſourneſs that ſeems to belong to all the *Orders* that are among them; nor are they ſo far poſſeſſed with the ill-natured and dangerous Opinions that belong to that *Church*, as to be paſt cure: and as a ſoftning of rigour towards ſuch, would lay the Apprehenſions that Self-preſervation does naturally raiſe in all People, ſo it would at leaſt make the utmoſt degree of Severity, that ſeems reconcilable to the Common Principles of Humane Society

Society, or of Christianity, appear more justifiable, if a restlesness under such easie Circumstances should afterwards drive a Government to it. But the returning of the *Severities* that our *Brethren* have suffered at the hands of the men of that *Religion* on the *Papists* of *England*, is a Practice so contrary to the *Christian Religion*, and to the *Principles* of the *Protestant Religion*, that I do not stick to say it, that I had rather see the *Church of England* fall under a very severe *Persecution* from the *Church of Rome*, than see it fall to persecute *Papists*, when it should come to its turn to be able to do it. The former will only serve to unite us among our selves, and to purge us from our Dross; and in particular from any of the Leaven of the Doctrine of *Persecution*, that we have not yet quite thrown out; but the other would very much stain the purest and best constituted *Church* in the World; and it would be too near an approach to the *Cruelty* of that *Church*, which we cannot enough detest: but how much soever we must hate their Corruption, we must still re-

member, that they are *men* and *Christians*, tho perhaps of a course grain, and that we our selves are *Reformed Christians*, who in Imitation of our Blessed Master, must not *render evil for evil, but overcome evil with good.*

GILBERT BURNET.

9th Persecution under Aurelianus who was Created Emperour anno Dom. 271. The

10th under Diocletian. 297 mad. Emp.r of persecution began an.o 306 being

9e 19th year of his reign. Euseb. Hist. Lib. 8. Cap. 3.

The
PERSECUTORS

Here mentioned, whom the Judgments of God did so visibly pursue and overtake, and whose *Death's* were so signally remarkable, are in order thus.

1 NERO.
2 DOMITIAN.
3 DECIUS. - 3 Trajan, ann. Do. 100
4 VALERIAN. - 4. Antonius Verus.
5 AURELIAN. - 5. Severus. an. 195.
DIOCLETIAN. 6 - Maximus. an. 237.
MAXIMIAN, surnamed the HERCULIAN. - 7 Decius. an. 250.
GALERIUS MAXIMIAN.
SEVERUS. 8. Valerianus. an. 256.
DAIA or DAZA, to whom GALERIUS MAXIMIAN gave the name of MAXIMIN, so that he was thereafter stiled MAXIMINUS DAZA, or simply MAXIMIN.
MAXENTIUS, the Son of MAXIMIAN the HERCULIAN.

A RELATION
Of the
D E A T H
Of the
PRIMITIVE PERSECUTORS.

Written by

Lucius Cæcilius Firmianus Lactantius;

Addreſſed to *Donatus* the Confeſſor.

I. GOD has at laſt heard you (My deareſt *Donatus*) in thoſe Prayers which you offer up daily to Him, as well as our other *Brethren*, who by the Vertue of their *Faith*, and of the glorious *Confeſſion* that they have made, have acquired to themſelves an eternal Crown of *Glory*. To theſe Prayers God has hearkned; and has delivered us from our Enemies: and a bleſſed Peace being now again re-eſtabliſhed upon Earth, the *Church of God*, that was

lately laid so low, begins to flourish again: and thro the Mercy of God, his House, that was laid in Ruins by his Enemies, is now rebuilt with a new Magnificence. God has raised up to us *Princes*, who have repealed all the wicked and bloody *Edicts* of the late *Tyrants*; and have so setled the Peace of Mankind, that instead of the Clouds and Storms of the late times, there is now an Universal Calm every where: and after all those Hurricans of Fury and Violence are now blown over, we enjoy a serene Air, and the happy quiet which we had so much long'd for. Now Gods Anger is turned away, and he hearkning to the Prayers of his Servants, has by the Interposition of his Divine Aid, raised up their afflicted and broken Spirits: Now he has wiped away all their Tears, and has put an end to the Conspiracies of their Enemies. Those who had set themselves in opposition to God, are now laid in the dust: Those who had rased the Temples of God, are now become spectacles to the World; and they who had exercised so much Cruelty on the

Servants

Servants of God, have received at his hands a ſevere Return of their Rage, and have breathed out their defiled Souls after they had undergone a great many diſmal ſtrokes, that were laid on them by the Hand of God. Their puniſhment was for ſome time delay'd, but at laſt it was ſignal: and in them all ſucceeding Ages ought to obſerve the Juſtice of God in puniſhing ſuch proud and impious *Perſecutors* ſuteably to their Crimes. In the manner of their *Death*, God calls likewiſe on all at what diſtance ſoever, either of time or place, to obſerve the Greatneſs and Majeſty of his Providence in deſtroying the Enemies of his Truth. And this will appear yet more evident to us, if we call to mind who have been the *Perſecutors of the Church* from its firſt beginning, and if we obſerve the Severity of the Divine Juſtice, that has appeared in their puniſhment.

II. Towards the end of *Tiberius*'s reign, in the *Conſulate* of the two *Gemini*, our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* was crucified by the *Jews* on the 23. of *March*. He roſe again on the *third day*, and

brought together his *Disciples*, whom the fear of his Sufferings was beginning to disperse, and he continued with them for the space of 40 *dayes* on earth, opening their hearts, and expounding the Scriptures to them, which till then had appeared dark and involved. He ordained and instructed them to go and preach this new *Doctrine* over the World; and he left them a scheme for their conduct, and for the Government of this new Dispensation. When he had finished his Ministry, a Cloud received him, and carried him up into Heaven: and then his *eleven Disciples* having assumed into their number *Matthias* and *Paul*, dispersed themselves over the World for the preaching of the *Gospel*, as their Master had commanded them: And during the space of 25. *years*, till the beginnings of *Nero's* reign, they continued founding many *Churches* in a great many different *Cities* and *Provinces*. During *Nero's* reign, *S. Peter* came to *Rome*, and made a great many Converts there, having thro the power of God, that rested on him, wrought several *Miracles*, and so

so he formed a *Church* in this place of *Empire*. This was brought to *Nero*'s ears, who finding that great multitudes, not only in *Rome*, but in all other places, were daily falling off from *Idolatry*, and were turning to this new *Religion*, and being carried by his brutal Tyranny to all sorts of Cruelty, he set himself first of all to destroy this *Religion*, and to *persecute* the Servants of God: So he both ordered *S. Peter* to be *crucified*, and S. *Paul* to be *beheaded*. But he did not escape unpunished: for God had regard to the Sufferings of his People. The *Tyrant*, as he was dispossessed of the *Empire*, so he disappeared all of the sudden, nor is there so much as the least remembrance left of the Burial Place of that Brutal *Prince*. But some have from hence taken up a very foolish Imagination, of his being translated, and of his being preserved alive in some other Region; which they found on some words of the *Sybil*, that mentions a Murderer of his Mother that had fled away, but that should return again: and they fancy, that as he was the *first* who *persecuted* the *Chri-*

ſtians, ſo he ſhall be likewiſe the *laſt* of their *Perſecutors*; and that he is to appear again immediately before the coming of *Antichriſt*: and they judge, (tho very unreaſonably) that as there were two of the Antient *Prophets* who were tranſlated, and who before the laſt Revolution of time are to appear as the Fore-runners of *Chriſt*, when he is to be come again, accompanied with his Saints, to begin his holy and endleſs Reign; ſo likewiſe that *Nero* ſhall appear as the Fore-runner of the *Devil*, who muſt make way to him, who is to bring a ſtrange Deſolation upon Earth, and a Deſtruction upon all Mankind.

III. After *Nero*, and the Interval of ſome few more years, there aroſe another Tyrant, *Domitian*, not much Inferior to him: who tho he acted in a moſt Tyrannical and Arbitrary Manner, being heavy to his People, and no leſs hated by them, yet he reigned in Peace and Safety for ſeveral years, till he began to ſet himſelf againſt God. But as ſoon as he was ſet on by the Inſtigation of the Devil to *perſecute* the *Holy Seed*,

Seed, then was he delivered up to the hands of his Enemies. Nor was his being Stabbed thought Punishment enough for his Crimes, but care was taken that no Memory should be left of him to Posterity; for tho he had raised many Magnificent Buildings, & that there were many Monuments of his *Empire*, both in the *Capitol* and in other Places, yet the *Senate* did express such a detestation of him, that they ordered that there should remain no *Statue* for him, nor so much as the Traces of any *Inscription* that made mention of his Name: And by a most severe Decree, which they past for this effect, they branded his Memory with eternal Infamy. Thus all the *Acts* and *Edicts* of this *Tyrant* being repealed, the *Church* did not only recover its former quiet, but became much more Flourishing under a Succession of many worthy *Princes*, who as they governed the *Roman Empire* very happily, so the *Church* suffered no Hardships under them: and she being thus freed from the Rage of her Enemies, dilated her self both in the *Eastern* and *Western* parts,

so that there was no corner of the World so remote, nor any Nation of it so wild, that was not visited by this Divine Light, and that was not tamed by its Discipline. But this long peace came at last to an end.

IV. For after many years the execrable *Decius* persecuted the *Church*, and who but so vile a man would have set himself against so holy a Doctrine. It seems he was raised up to the *Imperial Dignity* for this very end, that as soon as he began to rage against God, he might be immediately thrown down: for having marched against the *Carpi*, who had possessed themselves of *Dacia* and *Mœsia*, he was surrounded by the *Barbarians*, and both he and a great part of his *Army* was cut off: nor had he so much as the Honours of a Funeral, but as well became one that had set himself against God, his Carcass was exposed as a prey to the Beasts of the Earth, and to the Fowls of the Air.

V. Not long after *Decius* the Emperour, *Valerian* was inflamed with the like Rage, and stretched forth his hands

hands againſt God. In a very little while he ſhed a great deal of the Blood of the Saints; but God plagued him with a new and unuſual ſort of Judgment; and in his perſon there was a new remembrance left to Poſterity of Gods Severity in puniſhing his Enemies according to their Merit. He was taken *Priſoner* by the *Perſians*, and ſo he not only loſt the *Empire*, which he had governed ſo inſolently, but as he had robbed many others of their Liberty, ſo he likewiſe loſt his own at laſt, and fell under a moſt Infamous Slavery. For as oft as *Sapores* the King of *Perſia*, who took him, had occaſion either to mount on Horſeback, or to go into his Chariot, he made the *Roman Emperour* ſtoop down, that he might make his Back his Step to get up; and whereas the *Romans* had made ſome Repreſentations of the *Perſians* being defeated by them, *Sapores* uſed to rally *Valerian*, and to tell him, that the poſture in which he lay, was a more real proof to ſhew on whoſe ſide the Victory went, than all the Pictures that the *Romans* could make.

Valerian

Valerian being thus led about in Triumph, lived for ſome time, ſo that the *Barbarians* had in him occaſion given for a great while, to treat the very name of a *Roman* with all poſſible Indignity and Scorn. And this was the heightning of his Miſery, that tho he had a *Son*, upon whom the *Empire* had devolved by his Misfortune, yet no Care was taken by the *Son* either to reſcue the *Father*, or to Revenge his ill Uſage. After he had ended his Infamous Life, his Skin was flead off his Body, and both it and his Guts being tinctured with a red colouring, they were hung up in one of the Temples of the *Perſian* Gods, to be a perpetual remembrance of ſo remarkable a Triumph, by which they might always put ſuch *Roman Ambaſſadours* as ſhould be ſent among them in mind of it, and from ſo unuſual a ſight, warn them not to preſume too much upon their own ſtrength, but to remember *Valerian's* fall. But how ſtrange a thing was it to find, that notwithſtanding ſuch remarkable Judgments of God upon former *Perſecutors*, there ſhould

ariſe

ariſe any that ſhould dare ſo much as to project, much more to re-act, ſuch crimes againſt the Majeſty of that God that ſupports and governs all things.

VI. *Aurelian*, that was naturally Violent and furious, ſeemed to forget what had befallen *Valerian*, or if he remembred his Captivity, he did not ſeem to reflect on his Crimes, or to conſider *that* as the Puniſhment of *them*, and ſo he likewiſe drew down the Divine Diſpleaſure on himſelf by his Cruelty: but he lived not long enough to execute what he had deſigned, and he ended his days in the beginnings of his Rage. For before his Edict againſt the *Chriſtians* was ſent over all the *Provinces* of the *Empire*, he himſelf was killed at *Cœnophrurium*, a Town in *Thrace*, by ſome of his own Domeſticks, upon ſome ill-grounded ſuſpitions that they had conceived of him. It might have been expected, that the ſucceeding *Emperours* ſhould have been reſtrained by ſo many and ſuch ſignal Examples: But they were ſo far from being terrified by them, that

that they acted yet with a more daring Boldneſs againſt God.

VII. *Diocletian*, that was the Contriver of all our late Miſeries, as he ruined the *Empire* by his ill Adminiſtration, ſo he could not be kept in from acting likewiſe in Oppoſition to God. His Avarice and his Cowardiſe joined together, had produced great Miſchiefs. He aſſumed to himſelf *three partners* in the *Empire*, having divided it into *four parts*; and he did ſo encreaſe the number of his Troops, that every one of the four had a greater *Army* than the former *Emperours* had, who alone governed the whole *Empire*; and the number of thoſe who received his pay, growing greater than that of thoſe who payed him Taxes, there was ſuch an increaſe of new Impoſitions, that thoſe who laboured the ground being exhauſted by them, they deſerted the *Empire*, and by this means the beſt cultivated Soils were turned to Deſerts and Woods; and ſo ſevere was his Government, that he erected a great many new Charges and Imployments; The *Provinces* were divided

vided into many ſeparated Juriſdictions: many new Preſidents and Courts, Auditors, and other Magiſtrates were ſet up both in Towns and Countrys, who took little care of the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, their time being all imployed in Condemnations and Attainders; and they laid ſo many Taxes upon all ſorts of things, that as the Burdens under which the *People* groaned were encreaſed every day, ſo in the levying of them great Violences were likewiſe committed. All this had been more tolerable, if the mony ſo raiſed had circulated among the Souldiers: but the *Emperours* Avarice was ſuch, that he could not endure to ſee his Treaſure any way diminiſhed; and therefore he was always contriving new ways of raiſing *Money*, that ſo his *Exchequer* might be always full: and that tho his Expence was great, yet his income might ſo anſwer it, that he ſhould never leſſen that ſtock of Mony which by his Exactions he had brought together. After that the many Oppreſſions which he put in practice had brought a general Dearth upon the *Empire*,

Empire, then he ſet himſelf to regulate the Prices of all vendible things. There was alſo much Blood ſhed upon very ſlight and trifling accounts; and the People brought Proviſions no more to Markets, ſince they could not get a reaſonable price for them: and this encreaſed the Dearth ſo much, that at laſt, after many had died by it, the Law it ſelf was laid aſide. To all theſe *Diocletian* added an Inclination to build great Fabricks, and this brought a new Charge on ſeveral *Provinces* both for furniſhing of Labourers, and Artificers, and of Wagons for Carriage. He built *Palaces* for himſelf, for his Wife, and for his Daughters: and to theſe he added a *Hippodrome*, an *Arſenal*, and a *Mint houſe*: ſo that in a little while a great part of *Nicomedia* being filled with thoſe Buildings, many of the Inhabitants were forced to leave the Town with their Wives and Children, as if it had been taken by an Enemy: And when he had finiſhed a piece of Building at the coſt of ruining ſome of the *Provinces* by it, he found ſome fault or other in it, and then he pulled all

all down, and gave orders to rebuild it in another manner: nor was this ſecond Building ſecured from a new caprice, upon which it might be likewiſe perhaps levelled with the ground. So madly expenceful was he in the deſign that he took into his head of making *Nicomedia* equal to *Rome* it ſelf. I paſs over the Ruin of many, who wete brought under ſevere Judgments, that ſo a colour in Law might be found for ſeiſing on their Eſtates: for this was become ſuch a common practice, that the frequency of committing it had almoſt authoriſed it. And this was certain, that wherever a man was the Maſter of a rich piece of Soil, or of a Noble Building, that ſeemed to be Crime enough; and a Pretence was quickly found out for condemning the Owner, as if it had not been enough to ſeiſe his Eſtate, without taking away his Life likewiſe.

VIII. His *Colleague* in the Empire, *Maximian*, ſurnamed the *Herculian*, was not unlike him. Nor could they have been cemented into ſo entire a Friendſhip, if they had not been both

of the ſame mind, the ſame Thoughts, the ſame Inclinations, and the ſame Deſigns. In this they differed, that *Maximian* had more Courage as well as more Avarice than *Diocletian*; who as he was fearful, ſo perhaps from that Principle he was leſs Ravenous. Yet *Maximian's* Courage conſiſted rather in a daring to commit Crimes, than in a generous Nobleneſs of mind. And tho his ſhare comprehended not only *Italy* it ſelf, the Seat of *Empire*, but likewiſe thoſe rich Provinces of *Africk* and *Spain*, yet he was not ſo careful in the management of his Treaſure as was neceſſary: But as oft as he wanted Mony, the richeſt of the *Senators* were accuſed by ſome Witneſſes, that were ſuborned to ſwear againſt them of ſome practices for the *Empire*, and thus every day there were new Arts ſet on foot to get rid of the Eminenteſt men of the *Senate*, ſo that the ravenous Exchequer was often full of this ill-acquired Wealth. That accurſed man did alſo let looſe his Appetites not only in thoſe unnatural and hateful Diſorders with Boyes, but likewiſe

wiſe in the debauching the Daughters of ſome that were of the firſt rank. For whenſoever he was in any Journey, as he paſt he had Inſtruments at hand, to bring Virgins to him by force in the very ſight of their Parents. It was on theſe things that he built his happineſs; and he reckoned the chief Felicity of *Empire* to conſiſt in this, that he denied himſelf in nothing to which either his vitious Appetite or his Luſts carried him.

I ſay nothing of *Conſtantius*, becauſe he was ſo very unlike the reſt; and did indeed deſerve that the whole *Empire* ſhould fall into his hands.

IX. But the other *Maximian* who married *Diocletians* Daughter, was not only worſe than the two formerly mentioned, but did exceed the wickedneſs of the worſt *Princes* that ever were: There was a Barbarous Brutality in his Temper, together with a Cruelty not known to thoſe that were of a *Roman* Extraction: And no wonder; for his *Mother* was born beyond the *Danube*; and when ſome of thoſe Nations croſſed that River, ſhe came along with

with them, and had ſetled her ſelf in that part of *Dacia* which was formed into a *Province* by *Aurelian*. His body was ſuteable to his mind: he was very tall, and moſt exceſſively corpulent: and there was a fierceneſs in his Looks, his Words, and in his whole Behaviour, that gave a very formidable Idea of him. His Father in Law, *Diocletian*, dreaded him extreamly upon this following account: *Narſes* King of *Perſia*, being encouraged by the ſucceſs that his Grandfather *Sapores* had againſt *Valerian*, reſolved to extend his *Empire*, and to drive the *Romans* out of the Eaſt: upon which *Diocletian*, who was naturally very fearful, quite deſponded, and fearing a fate like *Valerians*, he durſt not undertake that War, but ſent *Maximian* into *Armenia*, and ſtayed behind himſelf, that ſo he might ſee what was like to be the iſſue of this War: *Maximian* took his meaſures ſo well, that finding the *Perſian Army* exceeding numerous, and that they were much encumbred with a vaſt Equipage, that they drew along with them, their Wives having followed

lowed them in this Expedition according to the Ancient *Perſian* Cuſtom: he, I ſay, got ſuch Advantages againſt them, that without any conſiderable loſs, he defeated their whole *Army*. *Narſes* himſelf eſcaped, but *Maximian* took all their Baggage, and ſo returned with great Glory, which encreaſed his Inſolence, as much as it did his *Father-in-Law's* Apprehenſions of him. For upon ſo great a Victory, he thought it below him to carry only the ſecond rank of Honour, and to be only called *Ceſar*; and when at any time he received Letters addreſſed to him, with the Inſcription *Ceſar*, he uſed to cry out in his brutal way, *Muſt I be ſtill Ceſar?* he grew at laſt to that pitch of Inſolence, as to give it out, that *Mars* was his Father; ſo that he ought to be lookt on as another *Romulus*, not conſidering the prejudice he did to his Mothers honour, of which he made ſmall account, deſiring only to be lookt on as begotten by a God. But I will not now enter into the particulars of his Life, that ſo I may not confound the order of things: for it

was after his assuming the *Imperial Dignity*, of which he forced his *Father-in-Law* to strip himself, that he broke loose into all the excesses of Insolence and Fury; in the mean time, tho *Diocletian* by his own ill conduct, and that of the two *Maximians*, whom he had taken Co-partners into the Government, (the *first* as *Emperor*, and the *second* as *Cesar*) had brought great disorder upon the whole State of the *Empire*, and tho his private crimes were very crying, yet matters prospered in his hands in a very unusual manner, till he came to defile them with the *Blood of the Saints*; and this carries me to give you an account of the occasion that led him to *persecute* them.

X. While he was in the *East*, he being excessively desirous to know what was to be the event of things, offered many *Sacrifices*, and in their *Livers* the *Diviners* searcht for those *Indications*, upon which they pretended to foretell things to come: But some of his *Courtiers*, that were *Christians*, being near him, made the sign of the Cross on their Fore-heads, at which the Devils being frighted away, they were all

all put in a great Confusion. The *Diviners* being likewise in disorder, could not find the ordinary *Marks* that they lookt for in the *intrails* of the *Sacrifices*; tho they offered up many, one after another, pretending that the *Divinity* was not yet appeased; but all the number of their *Sacrifices* was to no purpose, for no signs appeared: upon which *Tages* that was set over the *Diviners* said, either upon some conjecture or upon knowledge, that their *Rites* did not succeed, because there were some *prophane persons* that had thrust themselves into their *Assembly*. Upon which *Diocletian* being enraged, commanded, that not only all those who were present, but that all the rest of his *Courtiers* should come and *sacrifice* to their Gods, and ordered those to be *whipped* who should refuse to do it. He likewise sent orders to his *Military Officers*, to require all the *Souldiers* to sacrifice, and to dismiss such as would not. But this was all that he thought fit to do at first, nor did he suffer his Rage to carry him to farther Extremities against God or his true *Re-*

ligion, till after ſome time had paſt, that he came to Winter in *Bithinia*: and there *Galerius Maximian*, who was likewiſe inflamed againſt the *Chriſtians*, met him, & engaged the vain *Old Man* to go on with the *Perſecution*, which he had already begun, concerning whom I have received this account of the grounds of his Fury againſt our *Religion*.

XI. His *Mother* was a ſuperſtitious Woman, and was particularly addicted to the devotion of the *Gods* of the *Mountains*, ſo that ſhe offered Sacrifices to them daily, and feaſted her Officers with the meat of thoſe Oblations. The *Chriſtians* would not aſſiſt at thoſe entertainments, but gave themſelves to Faſting and Prayer, while ſhe and her Company were at thoſe Feaſts. Upon this ſhe conceived a hatred of them, and ſhe ſet on her *Son*, who was no leſs ſuperſtitious than ſhe her ſelf, by her ſpiteful Complaints to contrive their Deſtruction. *Diocletian* and his *Son-in-Law* had many ſecret Conſultations during a whole Winter, to which as no body was admitted, ſo it was generally thought that they were

treating

treating about matters of the greateſt conſequences. The *Old Man* withſtood *Maximian's* Fury long, and ſhewed him how pernicious the Council would prove, and how great a Diſturbance it would bring upon the *Empire*: much blood would be ſhed; for the *Chriſtians* were obſerved to be very willing to dye. Therefore he propoſed this expedient, that none of that *Religion* ſhould be ſuffered to continue in the *Court*, or in the *Army*: But all this could not divert the Rage of that Furious Man. Therefore he propoſed the asking the Opinions of thoſe in whom they confided; for he had this piece of ill nature, that when he was about to do any thing that was acceptable, he did it of himſelf, without taking the Advice of others, that ſo the Praiſe of it might belong wholly to himſelf: But when he undertook any thing that was lyable to Cenſure, he called for many perſons to deliver their Opinion upon it, that ſo others might be charged with the Blame of that in which he was chiefly in fault. Some few *Judges*, and ſome few *Mi-*

litary Men were called upon, and according to the Order of their Dignity they were repuired to tell their minds; ſome that had a particular ſpleen to the *Chriſtian Religion*, opined that all the *Chriſtians* were Enemies to *God* and to the eſtabliſhed Worſhip, and that therefore they ought to be deſtroyed. Thoſe that were of another mind, perceiving what was *Maximian's* deſign, and being either affraid of him, or deſirous to make their Court with him, agreed to the reſt in Opinion; yet all this did not prevail on *Diocletian*; ſo he reſolved to conſult the *Gods* themſelves, and ſent a *Diviner* to conſult with *Apollo*, who anſwered as might have been expected from an Enemy of the *Chriſtian Religion*. Upon this *Diocletian* yielded; and as he would not oppoſe himſelf to that which not only his Friends and *Maximian*, but even *Apollo* had adviſed, yet he endeavoured to maintain this moderation, that the deſign might be compoſed without the ſhedding of Blood: whereas *Maximian* moved, that all thoſe who refuſed to partake in the

Sacrifices,

Sacrifices, ſhould be burnt alive.

XII. A proper and an auſpicious *day* for beginning this *work* was next ſought for; and choice was made of the *Feſtivity* of the God *Terminus*, which was within five days of the end of *February*, that was the Concluſion of their year: implying by this, that an end was to be put to this *Religion*. This was the firſt day of their *Executions*, and the beginning of thoſe Miſeries that not only fell on them, but on the whole *Empire*. In the morning of that fatal day, in the ſeventh and eighth *Conſulate* of the *two* Ancient *Emperours*, the *Prefect* accompanied with ſome Officers, and ſome of the Receivers, went to the *Church*, and having forced open the Door, they ſearched for the *Image of God*:* all the *Books of the Scriptures* that were there found were burnt, and the Spoil that was made was divided among all that were preſent: this ſtruck a Terror into many, and many withdrew themſelves

*Not that the *Chriſtians* had any *Images* in their *Temples*, as *Lactantius* himſelf teſtifies, *de Origine Erroris*, lib. 2. pag. 65, 66, 67, 107, but the

Heathens having *Images* in all their *Temples*, were ready to conceive the like of them.

ſelves from the Storm. The *two Princes*, who from convenient places viewed all that was done (for that *Church* ſtood upon a heighth, ſo that it was within the proſpect of the Palace) were long in debate, whether they ſhould order fire to be ſet to it: But in this *Diocletians* Opinion prevailed; for he was affraid leſt if the *Church* had been ſet on fire, that might have ſpread it ſelf into the other parts of the *City*: for it was environed on all hands by a great many Noble Buildings; ſo that inſtead of ſetting fire to, it there was a conſiderable Body of the Guards, ſent with Axes and Mattocks, who in a few hours time levelled that lofty Building with the ground.

XIII. The day after this an *Edict* was publiſhed, by which the *Chriſtians* were declared incapable of all Honours and Imployments; and that they ſhould be liable to Torture whatſoever might be their Rank and Dignity; all Actions were to be received againſt

againſt them, and they were put out of the protection of the Law, and might not ſue neither upon Injuries done them, or Adulteries committed againſt them, nor for Thefts or Robberies; and they were to looſe both their Liberties and their Right of Voting. When this was affixed, one that ſhewed more of Courage than Diſcretion in it, took it down and tore it, and rallied the *Emperours*, who had put among their Titles, that they had triumphed over the *Goths* and the *Sarmatians*, that they acted like thoſe whom they pretended that they had ſubdued; he was preſently ſeiſed on, and after he had endured ſeveral ſorts of Torture; he was burnt at laſt, but ſuffered all with admirable Patience.

XIV. But *Maximian* was not ſatisfied with the Severity of this *Edict*, ſo he reſolved to draw on *Diocletian* to conſent to further Rigour by this Artifice; he ſet on ſome of his Creatures to raiſe a fire in the *Palace*, that ſo he might engage him to an unrelenting *Perſecution*: ſome parts were burnt down, and the *Chriſtians* were

preſently accuſed as the Common Enemies; and this Fire, that conſumed the *Palace*, raiſed a moſt Implacable Rage againſt them. For it was given out, that they had entred into Conſultation with ſome of the *Eunuchs* for the Deſtruction of their *Princes*, and that *two Emperours* were well nigh burnt alive in their own Houſe. *Diocletian* who affected the Reputation of being a Wiſe and Crafty Man, could not be brought to give any credit to this: but being exceſſively enraged upon it, he ordered many of his *Domeſticks* to be put to Death in a moſt terrible manner. So many innocent Perſons were brought before him, and were burnt. All the Judges and all the Officers of his Houſehold being authoriſed thereunto, put all People to Torture, and ſeemed to vie with one another who ſhould be the firſt that ſhould diſcover the bottom of this matter. But nothing could be found out; for none of *Maximians* Family was put to the Torture. He came and ſtood by *Diocletian*, and continued ſtill to inflame him more and more, that

ſo

so his anger might no way be abated. And a fortnight after the first burning, *fire* was a second time set to the *Palace*: But this was observed in time, yet neither could the Author of it be found out. And then *Maximian*, tho it was in the midst of Winter, left *Nicomedia* on the same day in which this second Fire was raised, protesting that he went away fearing lest he should be burnt alive.

XV. The *Emperour* was now set all on fire, and upon this he forced not only all that were of his Household, but all Persons whatsoever, to defile themselves with their *Sacrifices*; beginning with his Daughter *Valeria*, and his Wife *Prisca*. Some of the *Eunuchs* that were in the greatest Credit, and by whose Directions the whole Affairs of the *Palace* had been conducted before this *Edict*, were now put to Death; some *Presbyters* and *Deacons* were seised on, and without any proof against them, they were condemned and executed. Persons of all Ages, and of both Sexes were *burnt*, not singly one by one, but by reason of

their numbers, whole Companies of them were burnt all in the ſame Fire: and their Servants were caſt into the Sea, Millſtones being tied about their Necks. Nor was this *Perſecution* leſs violent in all other places: for the Judges were ſent to all *Temples*, and they forced all people to joyn in the *Sacrifices*. The Priſons were every where full. Unheard of kinds of Torture were invented; and that no man might have the Benefit of the *Law* that was not a *Heathen*: they placed *Altars* in the very *Courts of Juſtice*, and in the publick *Offices*, that ſo all who came to ſue before them might be put to it firſt to offer *Sacrifice*, before they could be admitted to plead: ſo that men came before their Judges as before their Gods. Nor was this all, Letters were alſo ſent to the other *Emperour* and to *Conſtance*, inviting them to concur in this matter, tho their Opinions had not been before asked, notwithſtanding the great Importance of it. The Old *Maximian* did comply very willingly in *Italy*; for he was naturally cruel: But *Conſtance*, that he might

might not ſeem to diſſent from thoſe that were in rank above him, did indeed give order for the pulling down the Walls of the Houſes where the *Chriſtians* held their *Aſſemblies*; for theſe could be eaſily rebuilt: but he took care to preſerve thoſe true *Temples of God*, I mean the *Chriſtians* themſelves.

XVI. The whole World was now brought under great vexation, the *Gaules* only excepted; thoſe *three* wild Beaſts exerciſed their Cruelty upon all the *Provinces* from the *Eaſt* to the *Weſt*. If I had a hundred Tongues, and the ſtrongeſt Voice, I could not ſet out all the Forms of Crimes, and all the Names of the Tortures that the Judges in the ſeveral *Provinces* put in practice againſt ſo many Holy and Innocent Perſons: But what need I engage in this recital, eſpecially to you, My *Dear Donatus*, who had ſo extraordinary a ſhare in them. For whereas you firſt fell into the hands of the Prefect *Flaccinus*, who was not a ſmall Murderer, you fell next into the Hands of *Hierocles*, who from being

a *Deputy* was made a *Preſident*, and had been an Adviſer and a Promoter of the *Perſecution*: and in the laſt place was brought before *Priſcillian* his Succeſſor, where, as well as before the other two, you gave an Evidence of your unconquered Courage: you were *nine* ſeveral times put to a great many Tortures, and at every one of them you overcame the Rage of your Enemies, by a glorious Confeſſion. In thoſe nine encounters with the Devil you defeated him with his whole Troop of Aſſiſtants: and by ſo many Victories you triumphed over the World with all its Terrors. How pleaſant was that Triumph in the ſight of God, in which inſtead of *White Horſes* or *Elephants* about your *Chariot*, you triumphed over the *Emperours* themſelves, and ſeem'd to drag them after your *Chariot*. This is true Victory, when thoſe that have conquered the World, are ſubdued: for they were overcome and ſubdued by you, who deſpiſing their Impious *Edicts*, made no account of all the Pomp and Terrors of their Tyrannical Authority. Their Whippings

pings and their Pincers, their Fires and Swords, and all the ſeveral ſhapes of Torture had no effect upon you: No ſort of Violence could make you fall from the Faith, and from the true Worſhip of God: This is to be a true Diſciple and a true Souldier of Chriſt; whom no Enemy can overcome, no Wolf can carry out of Gods Fold, no Snare can intangle, no Sorrow can ſubdue, and no Torture can break. After all thoſe *nine* Engagements, that proved ſo glorious to you, the Devil finding himſelf always overcome by you, durſt not aſſault you any more: for experience had ſhewed him, that you were not to be vanquiſhed: and ſince he ſaw that the Crown of Victory was ready to be beſtowed on you, he would not, by provoking you any further, give you the occaſion of receiving it ſo ſoon. Tho it was not given to you then, it is ſafely kept for you in the Kingdom of God, as the Recompenſe of your Vertue and Worth. But now I return to the ſeries of the Hiſtory.

XVII. *Diocletian* being now engaged into this wicked deſign, and having

having ſucceeded ſo well in the Execution of it, went ſtreight to *Rome*, that ſo he might celebrate there his entring upon the twentieth *year* of his *Empire*, that he was to open upon the *Anniverſary* of his coming to it, which was the twentieth of *November*. But as ſoon as that was over, he ſhewed how little he could bear that Freedom that the *Romans* had ſtill retained; at which he was ſo uneaſy, that tho the firſt of *January* was very Near, in which he was to enter upon his ninth *Conſulate*, yet he could not be prevailed on to ſtay to that day, and ſo he could not bear the ſtaying thirteen days longer at *Rome*, but he began his Conſulate at *Ravenna*. The Winter was both extream Cold and Rainy, ſo that the Journey did ſo affect his health, that it threw him into a lingring *ſickneſs*, that never went off quite: and being ill all the way, he was forced to be carried for moſt part in a Litter. His illneſs lay upon him all the Summer long: about the end of it he continued his Journey, and having come round the Coaſt of *Phrygia*, he got at laſt to *Nicomedia*, his

his Sickneſs being now come to a great height. But tho he was brought very low by it, yet he would needs appear in publick, and aſſiſt at the Dedication of the *Hippodrome* that he had built, which was done at the end of his twentieth year of *Empire*. His ſickneſs grew at laſt to ſuch a degree, that Supplications were made to all the Gods for his Life: but on the 13th of *December* a report was ſpread all about the *Palace*, that he was *dead*: the ſad Looks and the Terrour that appeared in all his *Courtiers*, and the ſolemn ſilence that was over all the *Court*, made that the Report was generally believed: The City of *Nicomedia* believed him not only dead, but buried; but the next day it was given out that he was yet alive; upon which the countenances of many that were concerned, were much changed: but others believed ſtill that he was dead, and that it was concealed for fear of the Souldiery, leſt they ſhould have fallen into ſome dangerous Conſultations, and that therefore his Death was to be kept up till *Maximian* ſhould come to *Nicomedia*. This grew

Dioclesians firſt motions

to

to be so Universally believed, that if he had not shewed himself on the first of *March*, it had not been possible to have perswaded the people that he was still alive. He was strangly altered by a whole years sickness, that they to whom he was very well known, could hardly believe him to be the same: He had indeed on the thirteenth of *December* fallen into so deep a Swoon, that it was thought he was dead, and he never recovered this so entirely, as to be wholly what he had been formerly: for he had ever after this, some fits of Madness, which returned at some times upon him, tho in the Intervals of those fits he had his Understanding very perfect.

XVIII. Not many days after this, *Galerius Maximian* came to him, not to congratulate upon his recovery, but to force him to resign the *Empire*: He had made the same attempt upon the elder *Maximian*, and threatned him with a Civil War if he would not resign; so now he set on *Diocletian*: He began at first more softly and gently with him; telling him, that he was now

now become ancient and infirm, and leſs able to undergo the fatigue of Government, and that therefore he ought to give himſelf ſome repoſe after ſo much Application and Toil. He ſet before him *Nerva's* Example, who reſigned the Empire to *Trajan*: *Diocletian* anſwered, that as it was not honourable for him, after he had born ſo ſublime a Character ſo long, to ſhut himſelf up in an obſcure Corner, ſo it could not be ſafe for him to do it, ſince during ſo long a Reign, he muſt needs have made himſelf many Enemies. The caſe was quite different in *Nerva*, who had paſt his whole life in retirement; ſo that his great Age and his unacquaintendneſs with affairs made him leſs capable of bearing ſo great a Burden, which therefore he threw off, and returned to that privacy in which he had ſpent the former parts of his life. But he offered to *Maximian* to receive him to an equal Dignity with himſelf, ſo that they ſhould be all called *Emperours*, if that would have contented him. The other, who had now formed a project of making himſelf

himſe ſole *Emperour*, ſeeing that from this Title that was offered him, little real Advantage would accrue to him, pretended that the Order which *Dioeletian* had begun, of having *two Emperours* with the Supream Power, and *two Aſſiſtants* to them in a lower degree of Dignity, ought to be forever maintained: It was an eaſy thing to preſerve a good Correſpondence between *two Perſons*, but that could not be compoſed if there came to be *four* of equal Dignity: He concluded, that if the *Emperour* would not retire, and make way for him, he would ſee to himſelf; for he would be no longer contented with the low degree in which he had been ſo long held: He had been now for fifteen *years* as it were baniſhed to *Illiricum*, along the River of the *Danube*, and engaged in conſtant Wars with the *Barbarous Nations*; while others were reigning quietly, and in delicious Seats. The *Old Man*, that was now much broken, having heard all this, and having likewiſe received Letters from the elder *Maximian*, that gave him an account of what

what had been ſaid to himſelf upon that ſubject, and had alſo heard that *Galerius Maximian* was encreaſing his Army; upon this, not without Tears, he conſented to that which had been propoſed to him; ſo that which remained was, that the *Ceſars* ſhould be named by the concurring Advices of all the *Four*. But the other rejected this, and ſaid, that the other *two* muſt conſent to whatſoever they ſhould reſolve on: and indeed, it ſeemed that there was no room for choice, but that the *Sons* of the other two muſt have been named for *Ceſars*. *Maxentius* was Son to the Elder *Maximian*, and had married the younger *Maximians* Daughter. He was a Man of a wicked and vicious Diſpoſition, and was ſo proud and ſo willful, that he would not pay the wonted reſpect of Adoration, neither to his *Father*, nor to his *Father-in-Law*; ſo that he was equally hated of both. *Conſtantine* Son to *Conſtance* was a moſt vertuous Youth, and had all the Qualities that could recommend him to the higheſt Dignity: his Air and Perſon were graceful; his capacity

city for Military Affairs, his Probity, and his obliging Deportment, made that he was beloved of the Souldiers, and wished for by all Persons: He was then in *Diocletian's Court*, and was put by him in the chief Command of the Army. But *Maximian* had his Objections to both these: as for *Maxentius* he thought he was not worthy of that Dignity, and he reckoned, that he who had behaved himself so Insolently towards him, while he was a private person, would become intolerable if he were raised so high. *Constantine* was indeed so amiable a person, that it was thought he would be a better and a gentler *Prince* than his Father had been: and so he would be able to check him as he pleased: wherefore *Maximian* resolved to have such persons promoted, who should be always in his power, who should be affraid of him, and should do nothing but by his order, so he proposed *Severus*: *Diocletian* excepted to him, as a Mad Extravagant, and Drunken Person, who changed the Day into Night, and the Night into Day: but the other answered, that he

he had deſerved that Dignity well, for he had taken great care of the Army, and had payed them faithfully; and added, that he had ſent him to *Maximian* the elder, that he might receive the Nomination from him; ſo this was aggreed to: and when *Diocletian* asked him, who ſhould be the other, he preſented one *Daia* to him, a young Man, that was half a *Barbarian* by his Extraction, and whom he had lately ordered to be called *Maximin* from his own name. For *Diocletian* had changed his own Name to that, to diſtinguiſh him from the other *Maximian*, who had alwayes maintained his Fidelity to him moſt religiouſly. *Diocletian* asked him, who that young Man was; the other ſaid, he was his Ally: but he ſighed, and replied, that he did not propoſe to him perſons that were capable of conducting the *Common-wealth*; the other ſaid, that he had already tried them. *Diocletian* inſiſted and ſaid, that he who was to enter upon the *Empire*, ought to ſee to it: and that for his part, he had taken his ſhare of Toil, and had ſtudied to preſerve the *Common-wealth* in a good

good State during his *Empire*, but if after his time it ſhould fall into Diſorder, it ſhould not be by his fault. All things being thus concerted in ſecret, on the firſt of *May* this great Affair came to be declared. The eyes of all People were on *Conſtantine*, not doubting but the Nomination muſt fall on him: all the *Military Men*, as well the Souldiers as the Officers, lookt at him, wiſht for him, and ſhewed much Joy in the hopes that they expreſſed of his Advancement: There was a riſing ground at almoſt three Miles diſtance from the *City*, and it was there where *Maximian* himſelf had firſt received the Imperial Purple, in remembrance of which there was a *Pillar* erected with a *Statue* of *Jupiters* upon it. That place was markt out for this Solemnity, and the *Army* was drawn out about it: and there the *Old Man* with Tears in his Eyes, told the *Souldiers*, that he was now become Infirm, and therefore he was reſolved to give himſelf ſome reſt after ſo much Toil, and to deliver up the *Empire* to thoſe who were able to undergo the fatigue of it: and that in order

order to that, he would now name new *Cesars*. Upon this all mens expectations being raised, he named *Severus* and *Maximin*; all people were amased; and since *Constantine* was standing by, some began to ask whether he had changed his name into *Maximin*: but to the admiration of all the Spectators, *Maximian* put by *Constantine*, and drew out *Daia*, and shewed him to the people, having stript him of the habit that he wore as a private person: and while all men were surprised, and knew neither who he was, nor of whom he was descended, (tho this unlookt for promotion, had so disordered them, that they testified no aversion to it) *Diocletian* threw his Purple Robe about him, and so he himself retired to a private State again, and returned to his private name of *Diocles*, which upon his coming to the *Empire* he had changed to *Diocletian*, and thus the Solemnity ended: and the *old Emperour*, like a Souldier that had obtained his dismission, retired, and drive thro *Nicomedia*, and so went into his own Countrey. And

Daia, that was raiſed up from following of Cattle thro Woods, and was firſt a common Souldier, then an Officer, after that a Brigadier, and now at laſt got to be *Ceſar*, had the *Eaſt* aſſigned to him, to be oppreſſed and ruined by him. And tho he neither underſtood Military Affairs, nor Matters of State, yet he was now ſet to conduct Armies inſtead of feeding Cattle.

XX. *Maximian* having now effected that which he had projected, in driving out the *Old Men*, behaved himſelf as if he had been the ſole *Emperour* of the whole *Roman Empire*. For tho *Conſtance* had the Precedence, and ſo was to be always named before him, yet he was deſpiſed by him, both becauſe he was naturally of a mild temper, and was now much diſabled thro the indiſpoſition of his body. He believed that either he would ſoon die, or that it would be no hard thing to force him to reſign his ſhare of the *Empire*. There was about *Maximian* one *Licinius*, who was his ancient Friend; for they had been Comerades from their firſt Imployments in the Army:

Army: and he had now the chief ſtroke in all Affairs. *Maximian* had not put him in the nomination of the *Ceſars*, becauſe he would not put him in a rank ſo far Inferiour to himſelf as to call him *Son*, but he reckoned that *Conſtance* would ſoon die, and then he was reſolved to receive him to be his *Brother* and *Collegue* in the *Empire*: and thus he projected to eſtabliſh himſelf in his Authority, and to be able to carry all things according to his mind; and after he ſhould come to his twentieth *year*, and celebrate the Feſtivals of it, as his *Predeceſſors* had done, he intended to reſign the *Empire*, and to put his *Son* in his ſtead, who was now only nine years old: ſo that he intended that *Licinius* and *Severus* ſhould be the *Emperours*, and that *Maximin* and *Candidianus* ſhould be the *Ceſars*: and thus he being eſtabliſhed and ſecured as much as was poſſible, ſhould paſs the reſt of his days in quiet, and great ſafety. Theſe were his Deſigns: But he having made God his Enemy, all his Projects came to nothing.

XXI. He having attained the Su-

pream Dignity, ſet himſelf to diſquiet the World, that was now become ſubject to him. In his Expedition againſt the *Perſians* he had obſerved that Cuſtom which was eſtabliſhed among them, by which all thoſe *Nations* eſteemed themſelves the *Slaves* of their *Kings*: ſo that they reigned over them with as abſolute an Authority, as a Maſter of a Family does over thoſe of his Houſhold. This vile Man intended to eſtabliſh the ſame Method of Government in the *Roman Empire*: and he was ſo impudent, that ever after that Victory, he uſed to magnify it: and tho he durſt not openly attempt the reducing the *Romans* to the ſame State, yet he behaved himſelf ſo as if he had conſidered all others as his Slaves: he began with the degrading thoſe that were in honourable Imployments; for he ſubjected the *Magiſtrates* and the Chief *Citizens* of the greateſt *Cities*, that were in the eminenteſt Rank, to the *Law of Torture*: and upon the ſlighteſt accounts, and in Matters that were meerly civil, he would put them to death as the Fancy took

took him, and for leſſer tranſgreſſions he put them in Irons; he took ſuch *Women* of Quality as pleaſed him out of their own Houſes, and brought them by Violence to his *Straglio*: and when any were to be whipped, he had poſts ſtruck into the ground in his Stables, to which they were tied, and ſo ſtretcht out, which was done more Infamouſly than was wont to be done to the Slaves themſelves. What ſhall I ſay of his Diverſions, and his Pleaſure? He had ſome *Bears* that he had choſen out in a great many years among all others, that were the biggeſt and the fierceſt that could be found, and that were by Conſequence ſo much the liker to himſelf: and when he intended to divert himſelf, he ordered one of theſe to be brought out, and a *Man* to be thrown to him, not to be killed by him out-right, but to be eat up in morſels: and as the Limbs of thoſe Wretches were torn aſunder, he uſed to burſt out moſt indecently into Laughter; ſo that he ſeldom went to ſupper before he had ſhed ſome mans Blood. As for thoſe

that had no Dignity, he condemned them to be burnt: and tho at first he gave the *Christians* leave to be gone, yet afterwards he not only condemned them to *Torture*, but to be *burnt* in slow Fires: the manner of which was this, they were first chained to a post, then there was a gentle Fire set to the Soles of their Feet, by which all the *Callus* of the Foot was contracted, till at last it fell all off from the Bones; then *Flambeaux* were lighted and put out, and while they were hot, they clapt them to all the parts of their body, that so they might be tortured all over: and care was taken to keep them alive as long as was possible, by throwing cold Water in their Faces, and by giving them wherewith to wash their Mouths, lest otherwise the Violence of the Misery that they suffered should have quite dried up their Throats, and so choaked them. Thus their Sufferings were lengthned out whole days, till at last their Skin being quite consumed by the Fire, it at last reacht to their Vitals, and then a great Fire was kindled, into which they

they were thrown, and ſo their Bodies were burnt to Aſhes: and their Bones that were not quite burnt, were gathered, and ground to powder, and thrown into ſome River, or into the Sea.

XXII. Theſe practices of Cruelty, that were begun upon the *Chriſtians*, grew in him to ſuch a Habit, that he began to exerciſe them upon others: he never puniſhed any gently: he ſeldom baniſhed any, nor did he condemn many to Impriſonment, or to work in Mines: but his daily *Judgments*, which paſt the moſt eaſily from him, were the condemning men to be *burnt*, to be *crucified*, or to be thrown to *Wild Beaſts*. His Domeſticks, and thoſe whom he imploied in his Affairs, were alſo ſeverely diſciplined by him. And as to all Capital Matters, *Beheading* was thought an extraordinary Grace, which was granted to very few; ſo that it was lookt on as a Reward for paſt Services, to have the favour of a gentle Death; yet all theſe were ſmall Matters. Eloquence was exſtinguiſhed by him; the *Advocates*

were deſtroyed, and all that were learned in the *Law*, were either baniſhed, or put to death; all ſort of Literature was reckoned among the ill Arts, and all learned men were lookt on as ill-affected to the *Emperour*, and were both hated and ruined by him. The *Judges* having *ſuperceded all the Lawes*, had a Licence given them to do whatſoever they pleaſed; and *Military men*, who had no ſort of Learning, were made *Judges* in the ſeveral *Provinces*, without having ſo much as *Aſſeſſors* aſſigned them.

XXIII. He alſo took care to involve the whole *Empire* into a general Calamity, and under a common Grievance, by the new *Tax* that he laid both on the *Cities* and *Provinces*: which was ſo ſeverely levied by the Taxmen that he ſent every where, that the ſtate of Affairs lookt as diſmall as if the *Empire* had been over-run by ſome Enemy, or as if it had been brought under ſome heavy Bondage. All mens Fields were meaſured, an account was taken of all their Trees and Vines, and of all Cattle; all men were like-

likewiſe polled, and where thoſe liſts were made, no difference was put between thoſe that lived in Town or Countrey: And as the Taxing was managed in the Towns, without any Diſtinction of the antient Citizens, and thoſe that were newly come out of the Countrey, ſo in the Villages all people came with their Children and Slaves to be liſted: and upon the ſlighteſt ſuſpitions men were whipt or tortured; Children were hanged up in the ſight of their Parents; Slaves were dealt with to accuſe their Maſters, and Wives to accuſe their Husbands. When no ſort of Evidence could be found, men were forced by Torture to accuſe themſelves; and when any thing was thus extorted from them, then they were proceeded againſt as if they had been clearly convicted of thoſe Crimes. No regard was had either to Mens Age or Infirmity: for the Sick and Feeble were taxed as well as the whole: and in the eſtimate that was made of mens Age, they added years to thoſe that were not yet of Age, as they de-

tracted ſome from thoſe that were paſt it. All Places were full of Grief and Sorrow. And he adventured to put in execution againſt the *Romans*, and thoſe *Provinces* that were ſubjected to them, all that any Conquerours had done to thoſe who being ſubdued by them, were by the Law of War at their Mercy: as if he would have revenged the Tax that *Trajan* put on his Anceſtors, the *Dacians*, which he laid on them as a Puniſhment for their frequent Rebellions. After that all men were thus liſted, then ſo much money was laid upon every mans head, as if he had been to pay ſo much for his life. Yet this matter was not truſted to the firſt Taxmen, but new ſets of them one after another, were ſent about; that new men might always find new matter to work upon; and tho they could really diſcover nothing, yet they encreaſed the numbers in the liſts that they made, that ſo it might not be ſaid, that they had been ſent to no purpoſe. By the means of thoſe Oppreſſions, the Stock of the Cattle

Cattle was much diminiſhed, and many men died: and yet the Taxes continued ſtill to be levied, even for thoſe that were dead: to ſuch Miſery were men reduced, that even Death did not put an end to it. The *Beggars* were the only perſons that were exempted from theſe Oppreſſions; for to have nothing to pay, was the only way to be covered from thoſe Exactions: But this Curſed Man took care to put an end to their want; for he gave Orders to gather them all together, and to put them in Veſſels, and when they were at Sea, he ordered them to be all drowned. So Compaſſionate was he, that he was reſolved that no body ſhould be extreamly miſerable during his reign: thus he found out an effectual Expedient to keep all men from pretending Poverty, as an Excuſe from paying the Taxes; but he at the ſame time, againſt all the Rules of Humanity, put a multitude of miſerable Perſons to Death.

XXIV. At laſt the Judgments of God came to ſeiſe on him: and now

all that Succeſs which he had hitherto enjoyed came to be changed. While he was appyling himſelf to thoſe things of which I have given you an account, he had taken no care to deſtroy or to dethrone *Conſtance*; for he was waiting for his Death; yet he did not apprehend that it would come ſo ſuddenly as it did. But *Conſtance* being now very ſick, writ to him that he might ſend his Son *Conſtantine* to him, having made the ſame deſire often before, but to no purpoſe: for *Maximian* had no mind to let him go to his *Father*: on the contrary, he had expoſed him to many Dangers, hoping that he would have fallen under ſome of them; he durſt not make an open Attempt upon him, fearing a *Civil War*, or rather a Mutiny among the *Souldiers*: but under a pretence of exerciſing him, he had engaged him to encounter with *Wild Beaſts*, yet all was in vain; for as the Hand of God was viſible in protecting him all along, ſo it appeared moſt ſignally now in the laſt and critical moment; for the *Emperour* not knowing how he could deny it any longer,

granted

granted him at laſt a paſs, which had the Seal put to it, while it was late; but he ordered him to come to him next morning to receive his Commands; and he had reſolved either to find ſome Colour for hindring his Journey, or to ſend Orders to *Severus*, to ſtop him on the Way. *Conſtantine* had ſome apprehenſion of that which might happen, and therefore as ſoon as the *Emperour* went to ſleep, after Supper he took Journey, and in the ſeveral Stages thro which he paſt, he carried with him all the Poſt Horſes. The *Emperour* on purpoſe to delay him, did not open his door next day till it was noon, and then he called for him: but he heard that he had gone laſt Night, immediatly after Supper; upon which the *Emperour* fell into a moſt violent fit of rage; and ordered ſome to be ſent after him for fetching him back; but when he underſtood that he carried all the Poſt Horſes with him, ſo that this could not be done, the *Emperour* could hardly forbear weeping. *Conſtantine* made all the haſt that was poſſible, and found his *Father* juſt breathing out his

laſt. *Conſtance* recommended his *Son* to the *Souldiers*, and delivered over the *Empire* to him, and ſo he ended his Life in all points as he wiſhed to do. *Conſtantine* was no ſooner poſſeſſed of the *Empire*, then he gave the *Chriſtians* the free *Liberty* of their *Religion*, ſo that his firſt *Edict* was the Reſtoring the Exerciſe of this *holy Religion*.

XXV. Within a few days after this, his *Image* with the Characters of the *Imperial Dignity* upon it, was ſent to *Maximian*: he was long in ſuſpence, not knowing what he ſhould do, he once intended to throw both the *Image* it ſelf, and likewiſe *Him* that brought it into the *Fire*: but his Friends diverted him from this; for they were ſenſible of the Inconveniences of irritating the *Army*, who were already diſpleaſed, becauſe that no notice was taken of them in the Nomination of the *Ceſars*: and they might probably enough have declared for *Conſtantine*, if they ſhould have ſeen him coming againſt *Maximian* at the head of an *Army*. Theſe Advices prevailed ſo far upon him, that tho it was much againſt his Heart, yet he

he received the *Statue*, and ſent *Conſtantine* the *Purple*, that ſo it might appear that he had of his own accord received him into the Partnerſhip of the *Empire*. But this broke all his meaſures; nor could he now make another *Emperour* Supernumerary: yet he fell upon this Contrivance, of declaring *Severus*, who was the Antienter perſon, *Emperour*, and *Conſtantine* not *Emperour* (as had been already done) but *Ceſar* only, in Partnerſhip with *Maximin*, that ſo inſtead of being next to himſelf, he might be the laſt of the *Four*.

XXVI. But while he thought that this matter was quite ſetled, he received a new Alarm, which was, that *Maxentius*, who was his own *Son-in-Law*, was declared *Emperour* at *Rome*. The occaſion of which was this: *Maximian* having reſolved to exhauſt the Wealth of the whole *Empire* by his *Impoſitions*, proceeded to that pitch of Madneſs, that he would not ſo much as grant the *City of Rome* an Exemption from the *Tax*: ſo he named the *Taxmen*, who ſhould go to *Rome* to take a Liſt of all

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY NEW YORK.

that were in the *City*; he had also at the same time made an attempt upon some of the Priviledges of the *Prætorian Bands*, so a few of those Guards that were left at *Rome*, having found a fit Opportunity for it, they first killed some of the *Judges*, and perceiving that the *People*, who were now much irritated, were not ill pleased at this, they declared *Maxentius* Emperour: When the newes of this was brought to *Maximian*, he was a little disordered with the first surprise of it, yet he was not much terrified at it. He both hated the Man, and could not resolve to make three *Cesars* all at a time. He thought it was enough to have been for once constrained to do a thing to which he had not a mind, so he sent for *Severus*, and perswaded him to assume the *Empire*, and he sent him against *Maxentius* with the *Army* that had been under his *Fathers* command, and ordered him to march streight to *Rome*, knowing well that those *Souldiers*, who had tasted so often of the Pleasures of that place, would not only endeavour to preserve the *City*, but would desire to make it

their

their chief quarter. *Maxentius* beginning to reflect on the Boldneſs of his undertaking; as on the one hand he had ſome reaſon to hope, that the *Army* which had ſo long been commanded by his *Father*, might be eaſily practiſed upon to declare for himſelf; ſo on the other hand he apprehended, that his *Father-in-law*, fearing the ſame thing, might leave *Severus* in *Illyricum*, and might come in perſon with his own *Army* to deſtroy him: upon this he began to contrive the means of ſecuring himſelf from this danger, which was hanging over his head; ſo he ſent the *Purple* to his *Father*, who had lived in *Campania* ever ſince his *Reſignation* of the *Empire*: and he declared him now for the ſecond time *Emperour*. His *Father*, who had reſigned againſt his will, and was longing for a Change in the State of Affairs, accepted of it very willingly. In the mean while *Severus* marched with his *Army*, and came at laſt to the very Walls of *Rome*. But the Souldiers ſeeing againſt whom they were come, did immediately abandon him, and went over to him againſt whom they were ſent.

ſent. *Severus* being thus forſaken, was forced to fly. But he was met on his way by *Maximian* the *elder*, who had now aſſumed the *Empire*, ſo that to avoid him he went to *Ravenna*, and with a ſmall handful of men he ſhut himſelf up in that place: and ſeeing that he muſt needs be delivered up, he reſolved to prevent that, and both rendred *himſelf*, and gave back the *Imperial Purple* to him, from whom he had received it: but all that he could obtain by this Submiſſion, was a Gentle *Death*; for order was given to cut his Veins, ſo that he died eaſily. Thus did *Maximian* perſecute thoſe that were raiſed up by himſelf.

XXVII. But *Maximian* the *elder* knew well the Madneſs of *Maximian* the *younger*: and did not doubt but that as ſoon as the news of *Severus* his Death ſhould be brought him, he would upon the heat of Anger, into which that might throw him, march immediately with his *Army*, and would perhaps bring along with him *Maximins* Forces; and he knew well that

that he was not ſtrong enough to reſiſt ſo great an *Army*, therefore he fortified *Rome*, and having ſetled matters in the beſt method that he could, he marched into *Gaule*, that ſo he might engage *Conſtantine* into his Intereſts, by offering him his younger *Daughter* in Marriage. But the other *Maximian* having gathered together his *Troops*, marched into *Italy*, and came to *Rome*, reſolving to extirpate the *Inhabitants*, and in particular to deſtroy all the *Senators*: but he found all ſhut againſt him, and well fortified: There was no hope of carrying it by a Surpriſe, and it was a very hard thing to beſiege it, nor had he *Men* enough for the *Siege*: for he had never before ſeen *Rome*, nor knew how great it was; but had fancied that it was no greater than thoſe other *Cities* which he had ſeen. Some of the *Legions* began to have a Horror at the unnatural *War*, in which the *Father in-Law* was fighting againſt his *Son-in-Law*, and the *Roman Souldiers* were fighting againſt the City of *Rome*; upon which they carried their Colours

Colours with them, and deſerted, and many others were ſtaggering, ſo that fearing *Severus's* Fate, he was ſo ſunk with the Fright into which this threw him, that caſting himſelf at the *Souldiers* feet, he begged that they would not deliver him up to his Enemy: and what with his Submiſſions, and what with the great Promiſes that he made them, he prevailed over them to continue true to him; but he would not venture more with ſuch Troops: ſo he marched away in all haſte, and in ſuch great Conſternation, that if he had been purſued by ever ſo ſmall a Body, it had been an eaſy thing to have defeated him quite, whereof being apprehenſive, he ſent out his *Army* in Parties on all hands, with Orders to Plunder and Deſtroy the whole *Countrey*, that it might not be poſſible for an *Army* that might purſue him to find whereupon to ſubſiſt; ſo that all that Part of *Italy*, thro which this deſtroying *Army* had marcht, was quite ruined; all was ſpoiled, Women were Forced, Virgins were Raviſhed, and all men were tortured,

tortured, that they might diſcover where their Wives, their Daughters or their Treaſures were concealed; and the Flocks of Sheep and Herds of Cattle were driven before them, as they uſed to do the Spoils that they took from the *Barbarians*; and thus he, who inſtead of being the *Roman Emperour*, was now become the *Plunderer* of *Italy*, retired back into his own Diviſion, after he had in this Hoſtile manner deſtroyed the whole *Countrey*. He had indeed long before this, at the time of his receiving the *Empire*, declared himſelf ſuch an Enemy to the very name of a *Roman*, that he once intended to have changed the very *Deſignation* of the *Empire*, ſo that inſtead of the *Roman*, it ſhould have been called the *Dacian Empire*.

XXVIII. After that he had left *Italy* in this manner, the other *Maximian* returned out of *Gaule*, and *he* & his *Son* were Maſters of that part of the *Empire*, but the *Son* was much more conſidered than the *Father*, both becauſe he had given the firſt riſe to this Revolution, and that he had invited his *Father* to his

his ſhare in it. The *Old Man* grew uneaſy when he ſaw that he was not in all points the *Maſter*, and by an Emulation unworthy of a Man, he envied his *Son* that reſpect which he ſaw was payed him. This went ſo far with him, that he reſolved to drive away his *Son*, that ſo he might *reign* alone; this he thought would be eaſily effected, and that the *Souldiers*, who had abandoned *Severus*, would ſtick firmly to him. Upon which he called together an *Aſſembly* of the *People*, and the *Souldiery*, as if he had ſome matter of great Conſequence to be communicated to them. He harangued to them long upon the Miſeries that lay on the *Commonwealth*, and at laſt he pointed out to his *Son*, and ſaid, he was the Cauſe of all thoſe Miſeries, and the Chief Occaſion of all the Calamities that lay upon the *Commonwealth*: and thereupon he tore the *Imperial Purple* from him. He being thus ſtript of that badge of Dignity, leapt down from the bench on which the *Emperour* ſat, and was well received by the *Souldiers*, who expreſſed upon

upon this Occaſion ſo much Anger and Fury, that the *Old Man* being affrighted at it, fell into great Diſorder, and was driven out of *Rome* almoſt as ignominiouſly as *Tarquin* the *proud* had been.

XXIX. He retired firſt to *Gaule*, and after that he had ſtaid there for ſome time, he went to the other *Maximian*, knowing him to be his *Sons* Inveterate Enemy: he pretended that he went to concert with him ſome things relating to the State of the *Commonwealth*; but his true Deſign was, that he might under this pretence of Reconciliation, ſeek an Occaſion to Murder him, and ſo poſſeſs himſelf of his ſhare of the *Empire*, ſince he was now thruſt out of his own. *Diocles* was then with the other *Maximian*, for he had been ſent for by him, that ſo his preſence might give ſome more Authority to his inſtalling of *Licinius* in *Severus's* ſtead. So that both the *Old Emperours* happned to be preſent on that occaſion: and now there were all at once *ſix Emperours*. But *Maximian* the *elder* finding that there was a Diſtraction in the *Councils*, and

and that he could not compaſs his Deſigns, fled again for the third time; and withdrew into *Gaule*, with new Projects no leſs wicked than the former had been: for tho both *Conſtantine* and his Father *Conſtance* had married two of his Daughters, yet he laid a deſign againſt his Life, and in order to his effecting it, he laid aſide his *Imperial Habit*. The *Franks* were then in Armes, ſo that *Conſtantine* was obliged to march againſt them. But his *Father-in-Law* perſwaded him, who as yet was in no diſtruſt of him, that it was not neceſſary to carry his whole *Army* with him: and that a ſmall Body would be ſufficient for defeating thoſe *Barbarians*; that as he might have the *Army* that was left behind in his own Power, ſo *Conſtantine* having ſo few Troops with him, might be Infallibly over-whelmed by the *Franks*. He was eaſily wrought on by his *Father-in-Law*, whoſe long Experience gave great Authority to his Advices. So after that ſome dayes were paſt, and that *Maximian* believed his *Son-in-Law* was now engaged among the

the *Barbarians*, he again aſſumed the *Purple*, brake in upon the publick *Treaſure*, and as he was wont to do, he diſtributed a large Donative among the *Souldiers*; and gave out falſe Reports concerning *Conſtantine*: but all this was quickly turned upon him: for *Conſtantine* was ſoon advertiſed of all that had paſt, and came back with almoſt Incredible Diligence, ſo that *Maximian* had not time enough to ſettle himſelf in his new Uſurpation, but was ſurpriſed, and was alſo abandoned by the *Souldiery*; upon which he fled to *Marſeilles*, and ſhut himſelf up within it. *Conſtantine* did quickly Inveſt that place; and having demanded a perſonal Conference with him from the Walls, he neither reproached nor threatned him, but only asked him, what he himſelf had done, and what was in *Maximians* mind, that had puſhed him on to act ſo Indecently as he had done? The other anſwered him very ſcurrilouſly: but thoſe about him ſet open the gates to *Conſtantines* Souldiers: ſo this rebellious *Emperour* and treacherous *Father-in-Law*, was

now in *Conſtantines* power; who ſatisfied himſelf with laying his Crimes before him, and ſo chiding him for them, he ſtript him of his *Imperial Purple*; but carried his reſentments no further; and left him both his *Life* and *Liberty*.

XXX. But *Maximian* having loſt both the Dignity of an *Emperour*, and the Regard that was payed to him as a *Father-in-Law*, and not being able to bear this Lowneſs of Fortune, fell to contrive new *Plots*: and ſuch ill uſe made he of *Conſtantine's* forgiving him, that he ſet on his *Daughter Fauſta*, ſoliciting her, what with Careſſes, and what with Entreaties, to contrive her *Husbands* Ruine, and promiſed her a better *Husband* when that ſhould be once done; ſo he beſought her to leave their Bed-chamber Door ſometimes open, ſhe undertook to do all that he begged of her, but revealed all to her *Husband*: Thus a train was laid for diſcovering his *Treaſons*, in an undeniable manner; there was an *Eunuch* put in *Conſtantines* place, to ſuffer what was projected againſt him. *Maximian*

mian roſe in the dead ſilence of the Night; and all things ſeemed favourable to him: he ſaw ſome few Guards, that were at ſome diſtance from the Bed-chamber; he told them, that he was going to give his *Son-in-Law* an account of a ſtrange Dream that he had dreamt. So he went in Armed, and having killed the *Eunuch*, and fancying that he had executed his project, he came out boaſting of what he had done. But he was not a little confounded when he ſaw *Conſtantine* coming towards him with ſome *Souldiers* about him. The dead body of the *Eunuch* was drawn out, ſo that he was manifeſtly convicted of the *Murder*: and he was ſo confounded with this Diſcovery of his Treachery, that he was, as it were ſtruck dead with it, nor had he any ſort of Excuſe or Defence ready. The choiſe of the manner of his *Death* was left to him, and he made choice of *Hanging*. Thus this great *Emperour*, that in the long courſe of 20 *Years Reign*, had governed the *Roman Empire* with ſo much Glory, was now forced to this moſt

Ignominious End of his Execrable Life.

XXXI. The Judgments of that God, who is the Avenger of his Truth and of his People, were in the next place no leſs viſible upon the other *Maximian*, that had been indeed the chief Contriver of this *Perſecution*. He was now thinking to celebrate the Feſtivals of the *Twentieth Year* of his *Reign*, and tho he had promiſed that upon that occaſion he would reſtore ſome of thoſe ſevere Exactions by which he had ruined ſo many of the *Provinces*; yet now inſtead of performing it, he made uſe of this Solemnity to lay new *Taxes* upon them. It is not eaſy to ſet forth the Severity of theſe *Impoſitions* that he raiſed upon this occaſion, chiefly of thoſe which were laid on the *Corn*. There were *Souldiers*, or rather *Hangmen*, that waited on all the *Taxmaſters*: and men did not know whither to turn them. The *Officers* came with their unreaſonable Demands, and thoſe who had not wherewith to ſatisfy them, were ſubjected to great Variety of Tor-

Tortures from which they had no way to ſave themſelves, but by doing that which was impoſſible for them: Men were beſet with ſuch numbers of Souldiers, that they could hardly breath for them: there was little or no ceſſation in the Trouble to which they were put all the year round; the very *Judges* and the *Souldiers* that attended upon them, fell into many Quarrels amongſt themſelves: there was not a Barn nor a Vineyard that was not ſeverely viſited; nor indeed was there enough left to preſerve men alive. But tho this may ſeem a very Intolerable thing thus to ſnatch out of mens Mouths that Bread which they had earned by their Labour, yet all this was ſoftned by the hopes that were given of what the *Emperour* was to do in his twentieth *year*. It was expected that men ſhould appear in rich Clothes, and bring much Gold and Silver along with them, but it was not poſſible to provide this, except by the ſale of the product of the Ground; and when this mad *Tyrant* deſtroyed all that, ſo that all men were ruined in order to

the raising of that Treasure, which was designed to be laid out when the twentieth *year* should come; yet the *Emperour* lived not long enough for that.

XXXII. When *Licinius* was declared Emperour, *Maximin* resented it extreamly, and would neither be contented any longer with the Title of *Cesar*, nor allow *Licinius* the Precedence: Upon this *Maximian* sent many Messengers to him, to induce him to submit to the Order that he had setled; and to pay the Respect that was due to *Licinius's* Age, and to his Gray Hairs. But *Maximin* stood upon his terms, and very boldly said, that he to whom the *Purple* had been first given, ought alwayes to be considered as the *Ancienter Emperour*: and so he would neither yield to *Maximians* Intreaties, nor to his Commands. The *Tyrant* was extreamly troubled at this, and in his brutal way he complained of *Maximins* Ingratitude, whom he had raised from so mean a state to so great a Dignity; of which the other was now so unmindful as to reject all his

his Orders, and his moſt earneſt Deſires. But when he ſaw that nothing could prevail on him, he reſolved to put an end to this ſecond rank of Dignity, and ſo to extinguiſh the Title of *Ceſar*; therefore as he declared *himſelf* and *Licinius* the Emperours, ſo he declared *Maxentius* and *Conſtantine* the *Sons* of the *Emperours*, (by which *Maximin* was quite ſhut out.) But he not daunted with this, writ to him that upon the laſt occaſion of a great Aſſembly that met in the Field of *Mars*, he had been ſaluted *Emperour* by the *Army*. *Maximian* received this with great Regret, but yet upon it he declared all the *four* Emperours.

XXXIII. In the eighteenth *year* of his *Reign*, he was viſited by God with an Incurable Stroke: An *Ulcer* bred in his *Secret Parts*, which daily grew and ſpread. The *Phiſitians* uſed both *Inciſians*, and other *Medecines*; but tho they brought it to a *Cicatrice*, and ſeem'd to have healed it, yet it feſtred, and broke out again, and the Humour did ſo corrode

the Veſſels, that a *Vein* burſt, upon which he loſt ſo much *Blood*, that it had almoſt coſt him his Life; for it was very hard to ſtop it. A new Cure was carried on with that ſucceſs, that the Wound was again brought to a *Cicatrice*. But upon a little ſhaking of his Body, the *Vein* broke again, and he loſt at this ſecond time more *Blood* than he had done at firſt. He became pale, ſunk, and waſted to nothing. So that the Low eſtate of his Body made that he loſt no more Blood. But now his *Wound* became more dangerous, outward Applications had no effect any more upon it: The *Cancer* ſpread it ſelf ſtill further, and the more it was cut, it ſeemed to grow ſo much the faſter; all the moſt famous *Phiſitians* that were every where ſearcht for, began to loſe hopes. And while all humane means became ineffectual, recourſe was had to their *Falſe Gods*, and *Prayers* were made for his Recovery to *Apollo* and *Eſculapius*. And ſome relief was pretended to have come from *Apollo*. But he grew ſtill worſe and worſe. His *Death* ſeemed very

very near, for the *Cancer* had consumed all the bottom of his *Belly*; his *Guts* were laid open, and were likewise rotting, and his whole *Breech* was overrun with the Putrifaction; some bold, but unhappy *Phisitians* would not for all this give over, and tho they had no hope of success, yet they were still trying new Remedies. Those drove the Evil inwards, even thro his *Bones* to the very *Marrow*, and now *Worms* began to breed within him. The *Smell* that came from him was so noysome, that it was felt not only over all the *Palace*, but in the very *City* likewise; and the Passages of his *Urin* and *Excrements* were now mixed, all the *Membranes* being corroded that separated them. He was eat up by *Vermine*, and the whole Mass of his Body turned into an universal Rottenness. With all this, he had most intolerable Pains, so that he often bellowed out, as if it had been a Bull wounded. Some living *Animals*, and others that were boild, were applied to the putrified parts, to try if the heat would draw out the *Vermine*: and this indeed opened as it were

a vaſt *Hive* of them: yet a ſecond Impoſthumation diſcovered yet a much greater *Swarm*, ſo that his *Guts* ſeemed to diſſolve all into *Worms*. A *Hydropſy* joyned to all his other ills, did ſtrangely disfigure his Body: all his upper parts were exhauſted quite, and dried like a meer *Skeleton*, covered with a Dead-like Skin: but at the ſame time all his *Lower Parts* were ſwelled up like Bladders, ſo that the Shape of his Feet was ſcarce to be ſeen any more. In all this Miſery did he languiſh a full *year*. His Conſcience was at laſt awakned, and he was forced to give praiſe to God: ſo that in the Intervals of his pains, he cried often out, that *he would rebuild the Church of Nicomedia*, and that *he would repair the Miſchiefs that he had done*: and being in his laſt Agonies, he publiſhed this following *Edict*.

* *Vide Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib.* 8. *cap.* 1.

„ XXXIV. * Among „ our other Cares, for the „ Profit and Advantage of „ the *Common-wealth*, one was to reduce „ all people to obſerve the *Ancient* „ *Lawes*, and the *Puplick Diſcipline* of the

„ the *Romans*; and in particular to oblige
„ the *Chriſtians*, who had forſaken the
„ *Religion* of their *Fathers*, to return to
„ a better Mind: Having obſerved, that
„ they, by what Reaſons ſo ever
„ moved to it, had been guilty of the
„ Wilfulneſs, and even Madneſs of
„ forſaking the *Ancient Inſtitutions* of
„ the firſt *Chriſtians*: and that accord-
„ ing to their different humours and
„ Fancies, they were framing *new*
„ *Lawes*, by which they might go-
„ vern themſelves, and were falling
„ into Diviſions, and forming many ſe-
„ parated *Aſſemblies*: upon this, we gave
„ out our *Edicts*, obliging them to re-
„ turn back to their firſt *Inſtitutions*;
„ which had great Effects on many; but
„ while great numbers continued ſtill
„ firm to their Rules, and as on the
„ one hand they did not offer that *Wor-*
„ *ſhip*, and that *Devotion* to the *Gods*
„ that is due, ſo on the other hand they
„ did not adore the *God* of the *Chri-*
„ *ſtians*. We therefore having regard
„ to all theſe things, and being moved
„ by our Princely Compaſſion and our
„ conſtant Cuſtom of Gentleneſs to-

„ wards all men, have thought fit to „ extend this our Grace and Pity even „ towards the *Chriſtians*: and therefore „ we do not only ſuffer them to con- „ tinue in their *Religion*, but ſuffer „ them to hold *Aſſemblies* for their „ *Worſhip*; provided always that they „ do nothing contrary to the *Eſtabliſhed* „ *Diſcipline*. By another *Ordinance* we „ will ſignify our pleaſure to our *Judges*, for their Direction. In the mean „ while we expect that the *Chriſtians*, „ in return to this our Clemency, ſhall „ *pray to God for our Health*, and for „ the continuance of the Proſperity of „ the *Common-wealth*; and ſo they may „ ſtill hope to enjoy our Protection in „ their reſpective Dwellings.

XXXV. This *Edict* was publiſhed at *Nicomedia*, the laſt of *April* in *Maximian's* Eighth *Conſulate*, and *Maximin's* Third. Then when the *Priſon Doors* were ſet open, were you, My Dear *Donatus*, with the other *Priſoners* ſet at Liberty, after you had been for the ſpace of *ſix years* ſhut up. Yet all this did not turn away the Judgments of God from *Maximian*: His *Putre-*

faction

faction went on ſtill, till it had quite waſted his whole Subſtance; ſo that not many days after the Publication of this *Edict*, he breathed out his laſt, having recommended his *Wife* and his *Son* to *Licinius*, and having put them into his Hands. This came to be known in *Nicomedia* before the end of *May*, ſo that he did not attain to his twentieth year of *Empire*, which was not to begin before the firſt of *March* following.

XXXVI. As ſoon as ever *Maximin* had heard the News of his *Death*, he being then in the *Eaſt*, made all the haſt that was poſſible to take into his poſſeſſion all thoſe *Provinces*: and as *Licinius* lingered, he poſſeſſed himſelf of all to the Straits of *Thrace*: and when he came into *Bithinia*, he took care to recommend himſelf to the Favour of the *People*, by diſcharging them of the Tax that was laid on them. By this means the *two Emperours* were now in ill Terms, and almoſt engaged in a War: For they lay with their *Armies* on the oppoſite ſhores. But expedients were found out

for the making up of all their Differences; and they had an Enterview upon the *Sea*, in which they were not only reconciled, but they entred into an Alliance: *Maximin* went back, reckoning that he was now secure, and so he governed *Syria* and *Egypt* just as he had done formerly: and tho the *Christians* were now received under the *Protection* of the *Government*, yet he broke all this, and he set on underhand the Procuring *Addresses* from the several *Cities* to be made to him, for hindring the *Christians* to build *Meeting Houses* within their Bounds; that he might seem to be in some sort forced to do that which he had resolved on of his own Accord. So having granted the Demand of those *Addresses*, he made the *Chief* of the *Priests* in the several *Cities* out of those who were of the *Government of the City*, which had not been practised in any former time, and he ordered them to offer every day *Sacrifices* to all the *Gods*, and to call in the Assistance of all the *Ancient Priests*, for looking after the *Christians*, that they might neither have *Publick*

Meeting-

Meeting-Houses, nor assemble themselves in Secret for their *Worship*: and required them that they should seise on them where-ever they could find them, and either force them to offer *Sacrifice*, or deliver them to the *Magistrates*. And not contented with this Subordination that he had setled among the *Priests*, he ordered *one* in every *Province* to be over all the *Priests* of the *Province*; and as he raised them up to this high degree of *Authority*, so for adding some Splendor to it, he ordered them to wear that sort of *white Habits* edged about with Gold, which might only be worn by the *Chief Officers* of the *Court*. He was resolved to put the same things in execution against the *Christians* in the other *Provinces*, which he had already done in the *East*. For that he might seem merciful towards them, he would not suffer them to be put to *Death*, but he ordered many other *Punishments* against them, such as the *Picking out their Eyes*, the *Cutting off their Hands* or *Feet*, and the *Cutting off their Noses* or *their Ears*.

XXXVII. While he was designing all

all theſe things, he received *Letters* from *Conſtantine*, which put him in ſuch a fright, that he reſolved to diſſemble for ſome time. Yet whenſoever any *Chriſtian* was found out, he was drowned ſecretly and in the Night; nor did he diſcontinue his Cuſtom of offering *Sacrifices* every day in the *Palace*. He alſo began another Cuſtom, of ordering all the *Meat* that was to be ſerved up to his *Table*, to be offered up firſt by the *Prieſts* at ſome Altar, and not to be killed by his own Cooks; ſo that nothing was preſented to his *Table*, but that which had paſſed thro ſome *Rites* or other of their *Idolatry*; by which means it was that none could eat with him, without being in ſome manner or other polluted with thoſe Abominations. In all other things he followed the pattern that his Maſter had ſet him: For if there was any thing left by *Diocletians* or *Maximians* Oppreſſions, he took care to raiſe all that ſo exactly, as to be ſure to leave nothing to any that ſhould come after him: ſo that without any ſort of ſhame, he robbed the People of all they had: He

ſhut

ſhut up all mens *Granaries* and *Store-houſes*, and forced them to pay by an Advance the Taxes of the *year* to come. So that there not being *ſeed* to ſow the Ground, this brought on a moſt intolerable *Famine*. Whole Droves of *Cattle* and *Sheep* were brought for his daily *Sacrifices*, with which he fed his *Domeſticks* and his *Souldiers* ſo copiouſly, that they came to deſpiſe the *Corn*, that was brought them for their Proviſion, ſo that without any Care they threw it often out of Doors. And as he had a vaſt *Army*, ſo he clothed his *Guards* very richly, and furniſhed them with much Gold, and the commoneſt and raweſt of his *Souldiers* had *Silver* in abundance given them. He was alſo extream liberal to the *Barbarians*. All the Praiſe that is due to him is, that he was like thoſe merciful Robbers, who are contented to ſtrip men without killing them; for if he did not put People to Death, that ſo he might ſeiſe on their Eſtates, yet upon every occaſion he either took away all they had, or gave it to ſuch as begged it of him.

XXXVIII. But

XXXVIII. But there was *one* Monstrous Wickedness, that exceeded all the rest, which he carried to such a blind and brutal degree, that one cannot find Words equal to it, for the Indignation which this must give, carries ones Thoughts further than his Tongue will serve him, to set it forth as it ought to be.

His *Eunuchs*, and the other Instruments of his *Appetites*, searcht in all Places, and wheresoever they found a beautiful *Woman*, she was dragged away without any regard had of her *Husband* or her *Parents*: Those whom he Imployed in this Service, *stript* both married Women and Maids, and so viewed them naked, and if any refused to submit to this, she was drowned as guilty of High Treason. Several married Men, whose Wives were thus violently taken from them, not being able to bear the Grief which this gave them, murdered themselves: and under this Monster, there was no other Security for Modesty, but Uglineſs. At last he carried this Licentiousness to such a pitch, that no Body was suffered

fered to marry without his leave, and without his taking all Liberties with the *Bride*, before the *Bridegroom* was admitted. He took the *Daughters* of the Men of Quality, and after he himself had corrupted them, he gave them to his *Slaves* to marry them. His *Courtiers* were easily induced to follow his wicked Example, and to defile the Beds of such as depended on them: for they saw that no Body durst punish it. Those who were of ordinary rank, were ravished by every body at his Pleasure; and such as were of the Chief rank, and so could not be ravished, were begged of the *Emperour* as Boons, and when he signed any such grant, the *Father* durst not refuse it, but saw that he must either die, or accept of some *Barbarian* for his *Son-in-Law*. For he had scarce any other *Domesticks* or *Guards*, but such as had been driven out of their Countrys by the *Goths* in the twentieth year of *Diocletians* Reign, during that Festivity. All these came and delivered themselves up to *Maximian*, and so he made use of those who had fled from being enslaved

enſlaved by the *Goths*, as his Inſtruments for enſlaving the *Romans*. *Maximin* being environed with ſuch Guards, and depending ſo entirely upon them as he did, treated all the reſt of the *Eaſt* with the utmoſt degree of Contempt.

XXXIX He made this the meaſure of his Appetites, *to eſteem every thing lawful to which his Deſires carried him*; And according to this Rule, tho he had acknowledged the Empreſs *Valeria*, that was *Maximians* Widdow, his adopted *Mother*, yet that did not ſecure her; ſhe had come to live in his *Court*, reckoning that ſhe would be ſafer there than in any other place, ſince he had a Wife of his own. But nothing was Sacred to him, when he was puſhed on by his impure Appetites; ſhe was yet in deep mourning, the year not being out, when he propoſed *Marriage* to her, offering to divorce his *Wife*, if ſhe would accept of him. Her anſwer was ſuch as could have been expected from her; that ſhe could not treat of her Marriage, while ſhe was yet in her Mournings, and while the

the Aſhes of her *Husband*, his adopted *Father*, were not yet quite cold. She added, that it was a ſtrange piece of Impiety in him, to offer to put away his *Wife*, who had been always faithful to him: which let her ſee what ſhe herſelf might look for from him; and in the laſt place, it ſeemed to her no ſmall Crime, as it was a thing without an Example, for a Woman of her rank to think of a ſecond Husband. All this was reported to *Maximin* in her name: But he was ſo enraged at it, that his brutal Deſires were now changed into Wrath and Fury. He preſently put her under a Proſcription, he ſeiſed on her goods, he took her Servants from her, and tortured ſome of her *Eunuchs* to Death; and ſent *her* and her *Mother* into Baniſhment; but not to any certain place: but ordered her to be hurried about from place to place: and he charged ſuch Women as were deareſt to her, with Adultery, and upon that forged pretence he condemned them.

XL. There was an Ancient Woman of Quality, whom *Valeria* had always

always considered as a *Mother*, and *Maximin* believed that the refusal that was made of him, was advised by her; so he ordered *Eratineus* the *President* to put her to an Infamous Death; with her he ordered two other *Women* of the same Quality to be likewise executed. The one was *Mother* to one of the *Vestal Virgins* of *Rome*, the other was the *Widdow* of a *Senator* and was the *Empresses* Kinswoman: but both their Crime was, that as they were Beautiful, so they were no less modest. They were violently seised on, not as if they had been to be carried before a Court of Justice, but as if they had fallen into the hands of Robbers, yet there was no Accuser to lay any thing to their Charge. But a *Jew* was found out, who being condemned for some other Crimes, hoped to obtain his pardon by becoming a false Witness against them. The Judge who condemned them upon this Evidence, carried them out of Town to their Execution with a Guard; for he was affraid that he should have been stoned by the people. This Tragedy

gedy was acted at *Nice*. The *Jew* being put to the Torture, was forced to accuſe the *Women* as he had been inſtructed: and when they offered to ſay any thing for themſelves, they were beaten by the Tormenters; ſo that notwithſtanding their Innocence, they were condemned. There was a great Lamentation raiſed upon this, not only by the Husband of one of them, to whom his Wife was extream dear, but by all the Multitude, that ſo unuſual a Spectacle had brought together: and ſo apprehenſive were the Judges of the Peoples uſing force for reſcuing thoſe Perſons out of their Hands, that there was drawn about them a Body of Archers, and others of the lightly armed *Souldiers*: and with this Guard were they led out to Execution. Nor was there any care taken of their Burial, for their Servants were forced to abandon them; yet ſome of their Friends, moved with Compaſſion, came ſecretly and buried them. The Adulterous *Jew* had not the Pardon that was promiſed him, ſo ſeeing that he was to be hanged, he

diſ-

diſcovered all this Myſtery, and with his laſt breath he declared to all that were looking on, that the *Women* had ſuffered *Unjuſtly*.

XLI. The *Empreſs* being now baniſhed to the Deſerts of *Syria*, found a ſecret Way of acquainting her Father *Diocletian* with her Condition. He upon that ſent to *Maximin*, and deſired that his *Daughter* might be ſent to him; but tho he repeated this over and over again, all was without effect: So after all, he ſent a *Kinſman* of his own, that was an *Officer* of the *Army*, in a high Poſt, and in great Credit, to whom he gave in charge, to put *Maximin* in Mind of the Obligations that he had received from him: but this Interceſſion was as ineffectual as the others had formerly been.

XLII. At this time *Conſtantine* gave Order that the *Statues* of *Maximian* the *Elder*, ſhould be every where pulled down; and that ſuch Pictures or Figures of him, as had been any where ſet up, ſhould be removed. Now *Diocletians* Statues and *His* being alwayes coupled together, the Diſgrace of the one

one drew the others likewiſe after it. *Diocletian* ſeeing this Affront put on his *Statues*, which no *Emperour* before him had ever ſeen done in his own time, and being now over-charged with this redoubling of Grief, he reſolved to put an end to his Life. He was in a perpetual Uneaſineſs, and could neither eat nor ſleep. He was heard to ſigh and groan continually, and was ſeen oft to weep; and to be tumbling ſometimes on his Bed, and ſometimes on the Ground. Thus he that had reigned over the *Roman Empire* for twenty years, was now ſo caſt down and mortified, that he *dyed* partly of Hunger, and partly thro Anguiſh of Spirit.

XLIII. There was only *one* of the Enemies of God now left alive, namely *Maximin*, whoſe Fall and Death comes to be related in the next place. He bare a great Envy to *Licinius* ever ſince he had been preferred by *Maximian* to himſelf; and tho he had lately entred into an Alliance with him, yet when he heard that *Licinius* was engaging himſelf into a ſtraiter Alliance with *Conſtantine*, and was going to marry his *Siſter*, he concluded that this

Union of those *two Emperours*, must certainly be fatal to himself; So he sent secretly to *Rome*, and writ very kindly to *Maxentius*, desiring his Alliance and Friendship, which *Maxentius* embraced very readily, as if it had been somewhat sent him from Heaven; for he had declared War against *Constantine*, upon the pretence of Revenging his *Fathers* Blood. From this some have imagined, that the *Father* had only pretended to fall out with his *Son*, that he might have the more Credit with the other *Emperours*; and by that means find an occasion of Destroying them all; that so *He* and *his Son* might have the whole *Empire* between them: but this is a Mistake; for it is certain, that *Maximian* the Elder had a mind to destroy his *Son* with the rest, and that when this was done, he intended that *Diocletian* & *he* should again re-assume the *Empire*.

XLIV. Now the War was begun between *Maxentius* and *Constantine*, which *Maxentius* managed by his *Generals*, but would not stir out of *Rome* himself; having had a *Response*, that whensoever he went out of the Gates of *Rome*, he should perish. He had

had much the better *Army*: for he had not only thoſe Troops that had abandoned *Severus*, but likewiſe others that he had brought together out of *Mauritania* and *Italy*. The two *Armies* fought, and *Maxentius*'s had the better; yet *Conſtantine* did not for that loſe Heart, but having reſolved to put all to hazard, he marched on to the Gates of *Rome*, and poſted his *Army* at the other ſide of the *Milvian Bridge*: the 27th of *October* was now near, which was the Anniverſary of *Maxentius's* coming to the *Empire*: and now his fifth year was almoſt out. *Conſtantine* was warned in a Dream to put the Divine Mark, the Sign of the *Croſs*, upon the *Shields* of his *Souldiers*, and ſo to give Battel; he took care to execute this, and ordered the Letter X with the Letters of the Name of *Chriſt* mixed in a *Monogramme*, to be drawn on all their *Shields*; and having made this his Diſtinction, he drew out his *Army*. The Enemy's Forces came likewiſe out, and croſſed the Bridge, but *Maxentius* himſelf came not with them; they drew up both in the ſame manner,

and both ſides fought with great Courage, neither of them giving Ground to the other; in the mean while there was a Sedition raiſed in *Rome*, and an Out-cry was made againſt *Maxentius*, as if he had taken more care of himſelf than of the Publick; and while he was entertaining the *People* with the Spectacles of the *Hippodrome*, there was a Univerſal Cry raiſed, that *Conſtantine* could not be withſtood; this put him into a great Diſorder, ſo he made the *Sybilline Books* to be ſearcht, in which it was found, that the Enemy of the *Romans* was to periſh that Day. This gave him ſuch aſſured hopes of *Victory*, that he marched out in Perſon to his *Army*: as ſoon as he had paſſed the *Bridge*, it was broke behind him. Upon this the *Battel* was renewed, and the Hand of God appeared over the *Armies*. *Maxentius* was beat, and when he thought to repaſs the *Bridge*, he found it broke, and was carried by the crowd of his men, that were flying, into the *Tiber*, and ſo was drowned there. An end being thus put to the War, *Conſtantine* was declared *Emperour*,

rour, with great Expreſſion of Joy, both by the *Senate* and *People* of *Rome*. Among *Maxentius*'s Papers he found *Maximins* Letters, by which he diſcovered his treacherous Deſigns againſt himſelf: He alſo ſaw the *Imperial Statues* that he had ſent to *Maxentius*. The *Senate* did *Conſtantine* the Honour to order his Name to be put firſt in order, before the other *Emperours*, tho that was claimed by *Maximin*, who was as much ſtruck with the news that was brought to him of *Romes* being thus freed from Tyranny, as if it had been a Defeat given himſelf; and as ſoon as he heard of the *Senates* Decree, giving *Conſtantine* the Precedence, he treated *Conſtantine* in a moſt reproachful and inſolent manner.

XLV. *Conſtantine* having ſetled matters at *Rome*, went during the Winter to *Millan*: and thither did *Licinius* come to marry his Siſter. *Maximin* hearing that they were now amuſed with the Solemnities of this Wedding, marcht with his *Army* out of *Syria* during the bitter Cold of the Winter; and having haraſſed his *Army*

with great Marches, he got to *Bithinia*: for the Season was very severe, and both by Snow and Rains the Wayes were very deep; and what with Cold and what with hard Labour, he lost all his Horse, so that all along where he had marched, he might have been traced by them; which was but an ill *Omen* to his Men: Nor did he stop within his own Limits, but having crost the Straits of *Thrace*, he came with his *Army* to the Gates of *Bysance*. There was a Garrison put within that Place by *Licinius* for all Events; so he studied first to corrupt the *Souldiers* by Presents and Promises, and then to terrify them by threatning them with a *Siege*; but both the one and the other proved equally ineffectual: they had eleven days assigned them, for advertising the *Emperour*, and having no return from him, they being disheartned by the smallness of their Numbers, rendred themselves. From thence he advanced to *Heraclea*; and being stopt there in the same manner as at *Bysance*, he lost some days there likewise. But by this time *Licinius* having marcht as

quick

quick as was poſſible, had got to *Adrianople* with a few men about him; in the meanwhile *Maximin* having likewiſe taken *Perinthus*, which gave him a new ſtop, he advanced 18 Miles beyond it, where he poſted himſelf: he could go no further; for *Licinius* had poſſeſſed himſelf of the Poſt that lay next to that, which was likewiſe eighteen mile diſtant from it; and having drawn together as great a Body as he could on the ſudden, he marched on towards *Maximin*, on deſign rather to hinder his Progreſs, than to enter into action; for as he did not intend to fight, ſo he had no Proſpect of Victory; for he had not above 30000. men: whereas *Maximin* was at the Head of an *Army* of 70000: for *Licinius's* Army was ſcattered over a great many *Provinces*, and he could not bring all his Troops together in ſo ſhort a time.

XLVI. While the two *Armies* were thus ſo near one another, that it was expected that the matter ſhould come to a ſpeedy Deciſion, *Maximin* made *a Vow to Jupiter*, That if he got the Victory, he would utterly extinguiſh the very *Name of a Chriſtian*.

The next night an *Angel* appeared to *Licinius* in his ſleep, and ordered him to riſe immediately, and joyn with his whole *Army* in calling on the *Great God*, and promiſed him an aſſured Victory in caſe he ſhould do this. *Licinius* dreamt, that after this he roſe, and that the *Angel* dictated to him the very *Words* in which he ſhould offer up his *Prayers*. And as ſoon as he was awake, he called for one of his *Secretaries*, and ordered him to write down the Words, which were theſe, *We pray to thee, O Great God; we pray to thee, O Holy God; we commit the Juſtice of our Cauſe to thee; we commit our Lives to thee; we commit this our Empire to thee. It is by thee that we do live; our Conqueſts and our Happineſs come from thee: O thou great and good God, hear our Prayers; we ſtretch out our hands to thee: hear us therefore, thou Holy and Great God.* Many *Copies* were quickly made of this *Prayer*, which were ſent about to all the *Officers*, and all were required to make their *Souldiers* get it by heart. This raiſed the Courage of the whole *Army*, who now

now lookt on the Victory as aſſured, ſince it was ſo Divinely fore-told. *Maximin* reſolved to give Battel on the firſt of *May*, which was the *Anniverſary* of his coming to the *Empire*, this being now the eighth *year* compleat ſince he was raiſed to that Dignity: and thus it happened, that as *Maxentius* was defeated at *Rome* on his *Anniverſary*, ſo *Maximin* run the ſame Fortune on his; only *Maximin* would needs anticipate his own Ruin; for he would needs fight the Day before it, that ſo he might celebrate his *Anniverſary* with the more Pomp, when he had defeated his Enemy. When *Licinius* heard that *Maximin's* Army was advancing, he likewiſe drew out his, ſo that they were in view one of another. There lay between them a great and barren Plain, called *Serenum*. *Licinius*'s men laid down their *Shields*, and took off their *Head-pieces*, and with hands lifted up to Heaven, they ſaid their *Prayer*, the *Emperour* himſelf beginning, and the *Officers* and *Souldiers* following him in it; which was pronounced ſo loud, that the other

Army that was to fall before them, heard the noiſe of it. The *Prayer* was three times repeated, and that being done, the *Souldiers* being now wonderfully animated, put on their *Head-pieces*, and took up their *Shields*. The *Emperours* themſelves parlyed a little; *Maximin* would hearken to no Propoſitions of Peace; for he deſpiſed *Licinius*, and fancied that all his *Souldiers* would have deſerted him, becauſe he was more ſparing in his Bounty to them; whereas *Maximin* was extreamly profuſe; and as he had begun with *Licinius*, not doubting but that his *Army* would without giving any ſtroke come over to him, ſo when he had thus doubled his Forces, he reſolved to go againſt *Conſtantine*.

XLVII. The two *Armies* drew at laſt ſo near one another, that the Signals were given, and the Enſigns on both ſides advanced; *Licinius's* men gave the Charge with great Vigour; but the others were ſo diſordered and terrified, that they could neither draw their Swords nor throw their Darts: *Maximin* run about on all.

all hands, perſwading *Licinius's* Men to turn over to him, what with Preſents, what by Intreaties; but all was to no effect; and being charged in perſon, he was forced to retire. His *Army* fell before the Enemy without being able to make any Reſiſtance; and that vaſt body of men was mowed down by a handful. They ſeemed to have forgot their Rank, their Courage, and their former Exploits; and the hand of God was viſible in delivering them over to have their Throats cut by their Enemies, as if they had come into the Field for an Execution, and not for a Battle. When *Maximin* ſaw that the matter went far otherwiſe than he had lookt for, and that great numbers of his men were killed, he threw away his *Purple*, and put on the *Habit* of a *Slave*, and ſo croſſed the Straits; for now the one half of his *Army* was deſtroyed, and the other half either fled or rendered it ſelf. And ſince the *Emperour* had deſerted his *Army*, the *Souldiers* were not at all aſhamed of deſerting his Intereſts: he made great haſt; for in a Night and

a Day he fled to *Nicomedia*; and got thither the first of *May* in the Night, which was an hundred and theerscore Miles distance from the place where the Battel was fought: he staied not long there, but having taken along with him his *Sons* and his *Wife*, and some few of his Domesticks, he went to the *East*; yet he stopt in *Cappadocia*, and there he took the *Purple* again, having gathered together some *Souldiers* partly of his own Straglers, and partly of some Troops that came to him from the *East*.

XLVIII. *Licinius*, after he had distributed a part of his *Army* into Quarters, crossed the *Straits*, and went over to *Bithinia* with the rest. When he entred into *Nicomedia*, he offered up his Thanksgivings to God, by whose Aid he had obtained the Victory: and on the thirteenth of *June*, *Constantine* and *he* being now in their third *Consulate*, the following *Edict* was sent to the *President*.

„ Whereas both I *Constantine* the *Emperour*, and I *Licinius* the *Emperour*,

„ had

„ had a very ſucceſful congreſs at *Mil-*
„ *lan*, in which we treated of all
„ things that related to the profit and
„ ſafety of the *Publick*; among other
„ matters we thought that nothing
„ could be of greater Advantage to
„ our People, or concern our ſelves
„ more, than the ſetling of thoſe mat-
„ ters, in which the *Worship* of the
„ *Deity* conſiſted; and therefore we
„ judged it meet to allow to all *Chri-*
„ *ſtians* and others, free Liberty to
„ follow that *Religion* which they
„ ſhould like beſt: that by this means
„ that Supream *Deity*, which dwells
„ on high, might be gracious and fa-
„ vourable to us, and to all our Sub-
„ jects: therefore upon due Delibera-
„ tion and weighty Reaſons, we have
„ thought fit, that no man may be
„ denied the Liberty of *Profeſſing* ei-
„ ther the *Chriſtian Religion*, or any
„ *other*, as he ſhall judge it beſt; that
„ ſo the *Great God*, whom we wor-
„ ſhip with free minds, may in all
„ things bleſs us with his gracious Fa-
„ vour and Protection. Therefore we
„ will have you to know, that we have

„ thought

„ thought fit to annull all those Re-
„ strictions, that might seem to be in
„ our former *Edict* addressed to you,
„ relating to the *Christians*: and we
„ do now ordain, that every one that
„ is disposed to adhere to that *Religion*,
„ shall be suffered to continue in it
„ with all Freedom, and without any
„ Disquiet or Molestation: and we
„ have explained this the more co-
„ piously to you, that so you might
„ understand that we have given a
„ free and absolute Liberty to the said
„ *Christians* to profess their *Religion*.
„ And since we have allowed this Li-
„ berty to them, you will likewise un-
„ derstand, that we allow the like free
„ and full Liberty to all those who
„ profess any *other Religion*; that so
„ according to the quiet to which we
„ have brought the *Empire*, every
„ man may enjoy the free Exercise of
„ that *Religion* of which he shall make
„ choice; for we will do nothing by
„ which any man may suffer any pre-
„ judice either in his *Honour*, or upon
„ the account of his *Religion*. With Re-
„ lation to the *Christians*, we have

„ thought

„ thought it fit likewiſe to add this
„ particular; that the *Places* in which
„ they uſed to hold their *Aſſemblies*,
„ and concerning which there were
„ ſome Rules ſet in a former *E-*
„ *dict* addreſt to you, that have been
„ purchaſed either from our *Exche-*
„ *quer*, or from ſome particular per-
„ ſons, ſhall be reſtored to them, with-
„ out any Excuſes or Delayes; and
„ without either Asking or taking of
„ any Money from them upon that
„ account. We order likewiſe Reſti-
„ tution to be made by all that have
„ obtained Grants of them; and that
„ all ſuch as may have either purchaſed
„ them, or obtained Grants of them,
„ ſhall in order to their being repaired
„ by us for their loſs, go to ſome Ma-
„ giſtrate, that ſo we, according to our
„ Clemency, may relieve them. In the
„ mean while, we order you to take
„ care, that without any further De-
„ lay, Reſtitution be made to the *Chri-*
„ *ſtians*. And whereas the *Chriſtians*
„ had beſides thoſe Places in which they
„ uſed to hold their *Aſſemblies*, others
„ likewiſe that belonged to them as *a*

Body

„ *Body corporate*; that is to say, to their
„ *Churches* in common, and not to any
„ particular persons among them; we
„ comprehend all these under the same
„ *Law*; and order them also to be re-
„ stored to the *Corporations* or *Assem-*
„ *blies* of the *Christians*, and that with-
„ out any Fraud or Dispute, upon the
„ fore-mentioned Terms; that those
„ who restore them freely, may hope
„ to be recompensed by us according
„ to our Bounty. In all which mat-
„ ters you are required to give your
„ most effectual Assistance to the *Bo-*
„ *dies Corporate* of the *Christians*, that
„ so our Pleasure may be the more
„ speedly executed; and by which we
„ shall the more effectually secure the
„ publick Peace. And we will be here-
„ by assured, that the Divine Favour,
„ of which we have had hitherto such
„ Proofs, shall always watch over us,
„ and that we our selves shall be always
„ successful, as well as the publick happy.
„ And that the Tenor of this our Gra-
„ cious *Edict* may be universally known,
„ we order you to affix attested *Copies*
„ of it in all places, that so no man may
„ pretend Ignorance. When

When the *Edict* was publiſhed, *Licinius* did likewiſe by Word of Mouth entreat all perſons, to ſee the *Meeting-Houſes* of the *Chriſtians* reſtored again to them: and thus from the firſt beginning of the *Perſecution*, and from the Deſtruction of the *Church* of *Nicomedia*, to the Rebuilding of it, there were ten *years* and about four *Moneths*.

XLIX. But while *Licinius* was purſuing after *Maximin*, he ſtill fled before him, and poſſeſſed himſelf of the narrow paſſages of *Mount Taurus*, where he built *Forts* to ſtop them up, that ſo it might not be poſſible for *Licinius* to paſs them; but he took a compaſs to the right hand: and when *Maximin* ſaw that there was now nothing to ſtop him, he fled to *Tarſus*; but being like to be ſhut up there, both by Sea and Land, and ſeeing no poſſibility of eſcape, the Anguiſh of his Spirit and his Fear, made him fly to Death, as the only way to eſcape from thoſe Evils with which *God* was purſuing him. He firſt eat and drunk to a great exceſs, as is ordinary for thoſe to do who reckon that it is their laſt meal that they

they eat, and then he took *Poyſon*; but his Stomach being ſo over-charged, made that the *Poyſon* had not a preſent operation on him; but inſtead of killing him out-right, it threw him into a lingering Torment, not unlike the Plague; by which his Life was ſo far lengthned out to him, that he felt his Miſery long: The *Poyſon* began now to work violently on him, it burned his Vitals ſo much, that his inſufferable Pains threw him into a Phreneſy; ſo that for four Days time he eat Earth, which he dug up with his Hands, and ſwallowed it up very greedily. The Rages of his Pain were ſo intolerable, that he run his Head againſt a Wall with ſuch force, that his Eyes ſtarted out of the Eye-holes; but as he loſt the Sight of his Eyes, a *Viſion* repreſented himſelf to his Imagination, as ſtanding to be judged by God, who ſeemed to have Hoſts of Miniſters about him all in White Garments; at this ſight he cried out as if he had been put to the Torture, and ſaid, that it was others, and not he, that were to blame; yet afterwards he confeſſed his own Guilt, being as it were forced

forced to it by the Torments that he ſuffered: he called upon *Jeſus Chriſt*, and with many Tears he begged that he would have pity on him; he roared and groaned as if he had been inwardly burnt up: and thus did he breath out his defiled Soul, in the moſt dreadful manner that can be imagined.

L. Thus did God deſtroy all the *Perſecutors* of his great Name, both *Root* and *Branch*: for *Licinius* being now ſetled in the *Empire*, gave order to put both *Valeria* and *Candidian* to death. *Valeria* had been ſtill preſerved by *Maximin*, who notwithſtanding all his Rage againſt her, and tho he ſaw now his own End approaching, yet had not the boldneſs to put her to death. *Candidian* was her adopted *Son*, for his *Mother* was a Concubine of *Maximians*; but *Valeria* being barren, had adopted him. She had no ſooner got the news of *Maximins* Death, then ſhe came to his *Court* in diſguiſe, that ſhe might ſee what would become of *Candidian*; but he appearing publickly in *Nicomedia*, and fancying that Reſpect would be ſhewed him becauſe of his Birth, and

appre-

apprehending nothing leſs than what befel him, was put to Death: upon which *Valeria* fled away immediately. *Licinius* ordered likewiſe *Severian* to be put to death. He was *Severus's* Son, and was now grown up to a mans Age, and had accompanied *Maximin* in his flight; but it was pretended, that he was aſpiring to the *Empire*, and for that he was condemned. All theſe had great Apprehenſions of *Licinius*, looking on him as an ill man; only *Valeria*, who had refuſed to reſign her pretenſions to *Maximin*, had reſolved to do it in his favour. *Licinius* ordered likewiſe *Maximins* eldeſt *Son*, who was then eight years old, and his *Daughter* that was only ſeven, and had been contracted to *Caudidian*, to be put to Death. And before that was executed, their Mother was drowned in the River *Orontes*, where ſhe had made many chaſt Women to be drowned formerly. And thus thro the juſt and righteous Judgment of God, all thoſe wicked perſons came to ſuffer the ſame things that they had done to others.

LI. *Valeria* her ſelf wandred about in

in the Habit of a *Peaſant*, during the ſpace of eighteen *Moneths*; but was at laſt diſcovered at *Theſſalonica*, where both *she* and her *Mother* ſuffered. The two *Empreſſes* were led to the place of Execution thro a vaſt multitude of Spectators, who were ſtruck with the Compaſſion that was raiſed by ſo lamentable a ſight: their Heads were cut off, and their Bodies were caſt into the Sea, ſo fatal did their Dignity and *Valeria's* chaſtity prove to them.

LII. I have given you this recital upon the credit of perſons that were well informed of thoſe matters: and I have thought fit to write them juſt as they were tranſacted, that ſo the true account of thoſe great *Revolutions* might not be loſt; and that it might not be in the power of any, who intended to write the *Hiſtory* of that *time*, to corrupt the Truth, or to ſuppreſs either their Sins againſt God, or Gods Judgments upon them.

It is to his Infinite Mercy that we owe our Thanksgivings; who has at laſt viſited the World, and has gathered together and recovered his Flock, that

was

was partly ſcattered abroad, and partly torn by ravenous Wolves; and who has deſtroyed thoſe Beaſts of Prey, that had waſted the Paſtures of his Flock, and had broken their Folds. Where are now thoſe once Glorious and renowned Names of *Jovins* and *Herculins*, that were aſſumed with ſo much Inſolence by *Diocletian* and *Maximian*, and that were afterwards derived by them to their Succeſſors! God has blotted them out, and raſed them out of the World.

Let us then Celebrate *Gods* Triumph over his Enemies with all the Elevations of Joy: Let us ſing of his Victories, and praiſe him for them; and let us beg of him by our moſt earneſt *Prayers*, repeated Day and Night, that he will forever eſtabliſh that Peace which he has given to his People after ten *years* of War.

And you in particular, My moſt Dear *Donatus*, who deſerves that *God* ſhould hear your *Prayers*, Intercede earneſtly with him, that he may alwayes ſhew Mercy to his Servants; that he may be gracious and favourable to them;

them; that he may protect his *People* from all the Snares and Aſſaults of the Devil; and that the preſent Flouriſhing Eſtate of his *Church* may be always preſerved ſafe and undiſturbed.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Pag. 8. lin. 4 dele *If*. P. 12. l 11. read *greater*. P. 17. l. 6. for *as* r. *a*. Pag. 49 l. 5. after *be* r. *purchaſed by*. p. 61. l. 26. *the*, r. *she*. p. 62. l. 17. *Mepſia* r. *Moeſia*. p. 86. l. 3. after *place* r. *you*. p. 90. l. 6. after *ſickneſs* r. *ſo*. p. 92. l. 12. *compoſed* r. *compaſſed*. p. 104. l. 4 *were* r. *was*.